

BBC

**VICTORIAN GANGSTERS**  
THE ORIGINAL PEAKY BLINDERS



# HiSTORY

MAGAZINE

**BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HISTORY MAGAZINE**

September 2019 / [www.historyextra.com](http://www.historyextra.com)

## The PRINCES in the TOWER

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## M. MOLEIRO EDITOR

Travessera de Gràcia, 17-21  
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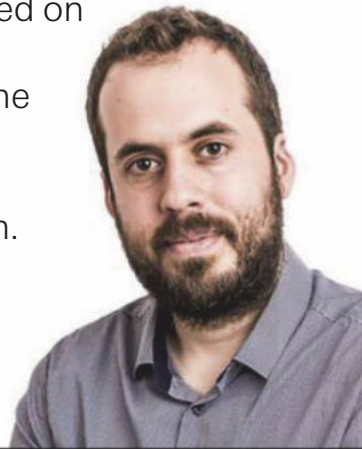
SEPTEMBER 2019

**“** The fate of the **princes in the Tower** is one of the greatest historical mysteries, and the debate often centres around who was behind the boys' murder. But what if, in fact, they were not murdered at all? That is the view of historian Matthew Lewis, and in this month's cover feature, on page 42, he argues his case against fellow expert Nathen Amin in a quest to determine **whether or not the princes survived**.

While we were making this issue, the streets around us – as in many other British cities – were disrupted by protesters from **Extinction Rebellion**. Though their tactics seem to divide opinion, it's clear that the environment is only going to become a more urgent issue in the years to come. Yet **green activism** is not a new phenomenon, and in *Behind the News* on page 10, Karen R Jones traces its roots in Britain back to the poetry of Wordsworth. Meanwhile, on page 17, Andrea Wulf argues that the 18th-century German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt might offer a helpful view on the **environmental crisis**.

Finally, this month is due to see the return of one of my favourite historical dramas: *Peaky Blinders*. The BBC series is based on real gangsters who did cause havoc on the streets of Birmingham, albeit some years earlier than implied by the TV depiction. On page 34, Andrew Davies explores the **world of the original peaky blinders**, revealing, as is so often the case, that fact is just as fascinating as fiction.

**Rob Attar**  
Editor



## THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



### Jerry Brotton

I've spent 30 years writing about Ferdinand Magellan's first circumnavigation of the globe, one of the most misunderstood of all the voyages of discovery. It has much to tell us about our current moment of globalisation.

**Jerry looks at how Magellan's voyage changed the course of history on page 50**



### Emma Butcher

PTSD caused by war is a current global issue. Recently, I've been reading historical accounts about how the world recognised and responded to war trauma when it had no name.

**Emma traces the changing attitudes to war veterans' mental health on page 56**



### Brendan Simms

Hitler wanted parity with the other great actors, principally the United States and the British empire, but felt that this desire was not reciprocated. Once he realised that, he had to try and carve out a more extensive role for Germany on the world stage.

**Brendan discusses his new biography of Hitler on page 70**

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In the **US/Canada** you can contact us at:  
PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037  
[BHlcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com](mailto:BHlcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com),  
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## EYE OPENER

### Blast from the past

An undiscovered bomb dropped by the Allies during the Second World War caused a minor earthquake when it suddenly exploded in a corn field in central Germany. Residents near the town of Limburg were awoken in the early hours of 23 June by the shock of the blast, which measured 1.7 on the Richter scale. Although no injuries were reported, the buried device left a 10-metre wide crater in the ground, seen here in a drone photograph. Experts say the explosion would have been triggered by decomposition of the bomb's chemical detonator.



## TALKING POINTS

# The empire gives back?



A recent *Guardian* article sparked an intense debate about the repatriation of colonial artefacts to their countries of origin. **ANNA WHITELOCK** took to Twitter for the historians' view

The hashtag #TheEmpireGivesBack has recently been shared on Twitter following a *Guardian* article by Tristram Hunt, director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, which asked: "Should museums return their colonial artefacts?"

It comes in the midst of an ongoing debate about colonial repatriation and demands for the restitution of historic objects taken from Africa during the 19th century. Hunt made the case that "for a museum like the V&A, to decolonise is to decontextualise... for alongside colonial violence, empire was also a story of cosmopolitanism and hybridity."

Many disagreed, with **Danielle Thom** (@Danielle\_J\_Thom) tweeting "I'm still angry about this... mainly the disingenuous 'misunderstanding' of the concept of museum decolonisation." Other historians, such as **Katherine Cook** (@KatherineR-Cook), rejected Hunt's assertion that empire was also a "story of cosmopolitanism and hybridity", implying that this view was a sign of "neo-colonial privileged voices dominating museum discourse".

Meanwhile, **Haidy Geismar** (@haidy-geismar) said: "It's not just about restitution, it's also about who represents whom, and acknowledging the consequences of colonialism on lives and cultures."

However, the most detailed response came in a series of tweets from **Museum Detox** (@MuseumDetox), a network for black and ethnic minority museum and gallery workers: "To not decolonise is to use the same language that compounds ignorance and continues the practice of exclusion. Decolonisation in museums isn't purely about restitution and repatriation. It is decolonising the culture, disrupting the norms, the status quo – being radical rather than being grateful."

This somewhat differed from the opinion of the collections manager and archivist behind the **Otautau Museum** account (@OtautauT) in New Zealand, who tweeted: "My view is that our attitudes, labelling and associated information can be changed without removing or relinquishing the questionable historical objects themselves, unless of course they were stolen."

But perhaps **Priyamvada Gopal** (@PriyamvadaGopal) most effectively summed up the general views being voiced on social media: "Decolonisation = reparative history = better history." A perfectly crafted tweet, but unlikely to be the last word on this highly contentious topic. **H**

Join the debate at [twitter.com/historyextra](https://twitter.com/historyextra)



Anna Whitelock is head of history at Royal Holloway, University of London

**// It comes in the midst of a debate about colonial repatriation and restitution //**

The British Museum recently agreed to loan its collection of Benin bronzes, taken from Africa in 1897, to a museum in Nigeria



The picture shows Dr Susila Bonnerjee (left) and her sister or sister-in-law at a suffrage meeting in 1913

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

### Photograph shows suffrage diversity

A newly discovered photograph at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has been cited as evidence of the "significant, but often unrecognised" role of women of colour in the suffrage movement.

Found in the archives of the LSE Women's Library, the picture – taken in Brighton in 1913 – shows two Indian women appearing among the council members of the Church League for Women's Suffrage, Britain's leading Anglican campaigning body at the time.

The photograph was unearthed by Clare Wichbold, a research volunteer at Hereford Cathedral, while searching for material relating to Florence Canning, who became chair of the Church League for Women in 1912. However, after spotting two south Asian women in the image, Clare contacted Dr Sumita Mukherjee, a historian at the University of Bristol, to see whether the pair could be identified.

Dr Mukherjee named one of the women as Dr Susila Bonnerjee, who was born in Calcutta and graduated from the London School of Medicine for Women in 1899. Records show that Susila entered private practice in Ealing, where she also served as secretary of the Church League's local branch.

It is thought that the other Indian woman in the picture is either her sister, Nalini, or her sister-in-law, Amiya, who visited Susila in 1912–13.

"This is a remarkable archival find, as there is such little photographic evidence of the involvement of women of Indian ethnicity in the British suffrage movement," said Dr Mukherjee. "Britain was very racially and ethnically diverse in the 1910s, but very few women of colour were encouraged to join."

"[However] A few middle-class Indian women did get involved, and it is wonderful to see evidence of the ways in which the British suffrage movement was not solely a white movement."



# HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history** headlines



## A GOOD MONTH FOR...

### TUDOR ECONOMICS

A paper suggesting that Britain should take inspiration from the 1601 Poor Law to boost growth and reduce inequality has won a top accolade. Simon Szreter, Hilary Cooper and Ben Szreter were together one of two joint winners of the IPPR Economics Prize in July. (For more on the first Poor Law, see page 29.)

### BLACKPOOL

Blackpool is to get its first civic museum thanks to a £4m grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Opening in 2021, Show Town: The Museum of Fun and Entertainment will explore the role that the seaside resort has played in popular culture.

## A BAD MONTH FOR...



### ORKNEY

Orkney's world heritage sites are at "significant risk" due to climate change, claims a new report. Experts believe that rising sea levels and heavy rainfall could lead to the loss of important Neolithic settlements, such as Skara Brae (pictured).

### Roman York to be revealed

York's Roman heritage is set to be uncovered as part of a two-year city centre excavation. York Archaeological Trust will carry out the digs before local developers begin construction work on a new office and retail district, which will also boast a large Roman visitor attraction "double the size" of the city's Jorvik Viking Centre.

### London museum plans unveiled

The Museum of London has revealed plans for a proposed new home in Farringdon. The development, estimated to cost £332m and intended to replace the present museum at London Wall, would be housed within the former Smithfield General Market building. As well as restoring a Victorian café found on the site, the proposals also include ideas for making the museum a "24-hour destination", accessible at all times of day.

### War graves work resumes in Iraq

Work to restore historic war graves in Iraq is under way for the first time in a decade. Following years of political instability in the region, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) has returned to its cemetery in Habbaniya, near Baghdad, installing 289 new headstones for Allied personnel, many of whom were killed during the Second World War. The CWGC now plans to expand its work to other sites in Iraq.

### Firm to pay Holocaust reparations

The Netherlands' state-run rail company has announced plans to pay compensation to survivors and the families of victims it transported to Nazi concentration camps during the Holocaust. Roger van Boxtel, chief executive of NS, said the firm would be offering payments to the estimated 6,000 people affected, totalling up to €50m (£45m).

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

A Roman relief dating from AD 125; An artist's impression of the Museum of London's proposed new home in Farringdon; Local contractors help renovate the CWGC cemetery in Habbaniya, Iraq; Jewish families are deported to Auschwitz from Westerbork transit camp in the Netherlands, c1942–43



## Britain's green activists

As Extinction Rebellion throws the spotlight on the threat of climate change, **KAREN R JONES** chronicles the history of environmental campaigning in the UK – from William Wordsworth's vivid descriptions of the Lake District to the dystopia of Doomwatch

Climate change, plastic waste and industrial pollution have rocketed up the news agenda in recent months. From David Attenborough addressing crowds at this year's Glastonbury festival to the Extinction Rebellion protests taking place across British towns and cities, ideas of environmental responsibility are prominent in today's public discourse. In fact, concepts of environmental responsibility, appreciation and activism have a long and vibrant history. It's a history that takes in a diverse array of historical actors, among them Romantic poets, Victorian campaigners for factory reform, advocates for the countryside and anti-nuclear protesters, and adds a valuable (and often understudied) dimension to the understanding of modern Britain.

Thinking about the beginnings of any 'ism' is a complicated endeavour, but many would point to the 18th-century Romantic movement as an important example of Nature (with a capital N) being invested with uplifting and aesthetic qualities beyond the demands of basic utility. Writing in *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes* (1810), William Wordsworth famously described the Lake District as a "sort of national property" that he felt everyone "with an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy" should have a right to: an early example of an appreciation for beautiful landscapes translating into a call for their protection. Two decades earlier, the naturalist Gilbert White, who is popularly credited as Britain's first ecologist, wrote his *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789) out of an abiding connection to the landscape, gained through close observation of local fauna and flora.

Looming large in an environmental and environmentalist history of Britain is the industrial revolution. While many celebrated this new manufacturing age, with its capital gains, factories and technological wizardry – postcards of sulphurous clouds and belching smokestacks lionised the productive spirit of 'Beautiful Manchester' – others were less sanguine. The modern city brought optimism and progress, but also environmental problems: cholera and various communicable diseases, chemical contamination

**// The modern city brought optimism and progress but also cholera, chemical contamination and atmospheric pollution //**



**Dirty money** A c1805 engraving of Coalbrookdale ironworks. While many Britons celebrated the industrial revolution's economic benefits, others bemoaned its impact on the country's air and rivers

and atmospheric pollution, to name but a few.

Victorian environmental concerns came in many guises, from fretting over the endemic smoky haze that covered the northern manufacturing centres of Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield to fears sparked by the 'Great Horse Manure Crisis of 1894' and a capital drowning in equine faeces (a prospect avoided, somewhat ironically, by the invention of the internal combustion engine). Factory reformers, green space advocates, smoke abatement societies and activists against animal cruelty all became pioneers in environmental activism, drawing significant connections between a healthy environment and a healthy society.

As the urban world encroached, conservation became an important motif. The RSPB was founded in 1889 and, led by female campaigners, agitated for the protection of birds (and especially a limit on their use in millinery). The National Trust, founded by Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley in 1895, began to lobby for the preservation of sites on the basis of their "beauty or historical interest", abetted by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (which was later joined by sister bodies in Wales and Scotland), established in 1926.

A passion for the countryside, alongside concerns over the privatisation of commons land since the early 1700s, invited an activist response on Sunday 24 April 1932, when hundreds of workers (many of whom belonged to ramblers' societies) engaged in a mass trespass of Kinder Scout





### Existential threat

An Extinction Rebellion rally in east London, July 2019. In some respects, the movement recalls the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp of the 1980s

in Derbyshire: an important act of civil disobedience that demanded a 'right to roam'. Such campaigns for nature conservation led to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949), and the dedication of the Peak District National Park in 1951.

### Smog and seabirds

The post-1945 era augured a new phase in British environmentalism, one symbolised by the atomic bomb and a capacity for *Homo sapiens* to transform the biosphere on a hitherto unprecedented scale. Walkers marched from Aldermaston to London in Ban-the-Bomb protests led by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (founded in 1958). Concerns about nuclear contamination were also joined by worries about pesticides and other encompassing threats to life, eloquently articulated by the US biologist Rachel Carson in her seminal tract *Silent Spring* (1962).

In postwar Britain, this sentiment was galvanised by striking examples of environmental crisis. London's Great Smog of 1952 – a deadly conjugation of fog and smoke emissions – led to the deaths of 12,000 people, days of near-zero visibility and the removal of prized plants from Kew Gardens to Kent. The deleterious impact of modern industrialism was also made clear by the stricken Torrey Canyon oil tanker dumping more than 100,000 tonnes of crude off the Cornish coast in March 1967; images of mired seabirds capturing the public attention in an early example of TV environmentalism in action.

Significantly, these were the years in which 'environmentalism' as a tenet came to maturation, with single-issue campaigns giving way to protests in defence of biotic health. British sitting rooms were treated to a range of

eco-disaster scenarios courtesy of the *Doomwatch* series (February 1970, with a first episode entitled *The Plastic Eaters*) and a plethora of BBC natural history productions such as *Look* (1955), hosted by Peter Scott. A 1956 episode of the BBC series *Zoo Quest*, in which David Attenborough went in search of a Komodo dragon, was watched by the equivalent of 50 per cent of the adult viewing public.

The 1970s – the so-called 'decade of the environment' – was ushered in by the first mention of the phrase "our environment" in a political party conference speech, by Harold Wilson at the Labour conference in Brighton in 1969. The seventies ended with growing concerns over acid rain, rainforest destruction, PCB chemicals and the plight of marine mammals.

Fuelled by a sense of environmental crisis and conscience, and drawing tactics and personnel from the counterculture movements, a new brand of mass-movement environmentalism was championed by Friends of the Earth (founded 1971), Greenpeace (1971) and People (1973, which went on to become the Green party). Radical eco-politics were to develop under the auspices of Earth First! (1980), while the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (1981) led a grassroots feminist campaign against the military-industrial complex. Both of them provided philosophical and activist foundations for today's Extinction Rebellion.

Environmentalism is a major part of modern British history. And living, as we are, in the age of the Anthropocene – an epoch defined by humanity's capacity to transform the world around us – it is set to become more important still. **H**



Karen R Jones is a reader in environmental and cultural history at the University of Kent





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**MICHAEL WOOD ON...**  
A PERSONAL LINK TO PETERLOO

## // This extraordinary image shows that all families have their tales //

On 16 August it will be the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre, when a 60,000-strong demonstration for parliamentary reform, which had gathered in a holiday atmosphere in St Peter's Field in Manchester, was attacked by troops and local yeomanry. Eighteen were killed and 700 injured, with women – depicted in contemporary illustrations in their Sunday-best white dresses and wide-brimmed hats – figuring disproportionately in the casualty lists. New research into Home Office records and letters in Robert Poole's book *Peterloo: The English Uprising* shows that the authorities had decided in advance to use force to disperse the crowd.

Such shocking violence caused widespread anger, and the outpouring of songs and poetry included Shelley's *The Masque of Anarchy*, surely the greatest political poem in English ("I met Murder on the way – / He had a mask like Castlereagh"). Many radical newspapers sprang up; the *Manchester Guardian* was founded in the aftermath.

On my first day at Manchester Grammar School, aged 11, our history teacher reminded us that our hometown was the city of the industrial revolution, and the Chartists, but also "of the heroes and heroines of Peterloo – and, boys, don't you forget it!" But to my shame, I never closely asked my dad about our family history, even though he came from Failsworth, near Oldham, from which a sizeable contingent went to Peterloo. But recently my sister started doing the family tree, and traced our Failsworth family back in an unbroken line to the 18th century. Dad's great-grandfather Jim had agitated for the vote, and raised money for victims of the 1860s Cotton Famine.

Then, after my mum died three years ago aged nearly 97, while clearing out her house we opened a box of my dad's things, including his microscope and slides, and his Pharmaceutical Society certificate (he had been a dispensing chemist). There, also, was a bundle of photos, postcards and books about his native place: a guide to Failsworth; a pamphlet by the local poet Ben Brierley; and a tatty booklet about the famous Failsworth Pole, which was erected in 1793 by the village 'Tories' against the 'Jacobins' and radicals who were fighting for the people's rights. It was here that the demonstrators had gathered before Peterloo, crowning their leaders with the French 'Cap of Liberty'. The place, it turned out, had been violently split: the librarian of the radical library on the green was attacked for having copy of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*.

After Peterloo, people raised a fund for Robert Carlile, the radical publisher then in Dorchester Gaol. Their letter was signed by 50 Failsworth men and women – readers of Paine, freethinkers, atheists and republicans, an extraordinary insight into the culture of these mill towns.

In some of these books was an extraordinary photograph, which in this anniversary year has taken on an entirely new meaning to me. It was taken on 27 September 1884, 65 years after the massacre, and shows 11 Failsworth Peterloo veterans, most now in their eighties, still fighting for the franchise, with a tattered banner that they had carried that day in 1819. Some of them – the Schofields, Whitakers, Chaddertons and Ogdens – were old Failsworth families who went back to the 17th century (my ancestors, the Woods, were linked to some by marriage). Others were Irish, like Mary Collins and Catherine McMurdo. All were hale and hearty as they posed by a loom shed near the Anglers Arms – where my great-great-grandma Hannah, a former bobbin winder, was landlady.

That day in 1884, they told stories, Mary sang a 15-verse Peterloo ballad by an Ashton weaver, John Stafford, who had been at the massacre, and their stories vividly brought back the horror and shock of that sparkling blue summer day in St Peter's Field.

As a glimpse of that extraordinary event, 65 years on – and as an insight into a forgotten family history – I find this an incredibly moving image. Which just goes to show that, often unbeknown to its members, any family, no matter how ordinary, has its tales – you just have to ask the old folks before it's too late. I'm sorry to say that I didn't: I assumed our story was just too ordinary. Now I know better. It's taken a long time, but this late in life I now have a better idea of where I come from – which I guess is the point of history? **H**

**Michael Wood** is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and will be talking about Peterloo at our History Weekend events. Visit [historyextra.com/events](http://historyextra.com/events) for details

**BBC**



The 11 Peterloo veterans from Failsworth, photographed in 1884 with the banner they carried at the massacre in 1819

The Radio 4 series **Peterloo: The Massacre That Changed Britain** is available on BBC Sounds

**LISTEN**



ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG



# ANNIVERSARIES

**DOMINIC SANDBROOK** highlights events that took place in September in history

**12 SEPTEMBER 1846**

## Lovers Barrett and Browning elope in secret

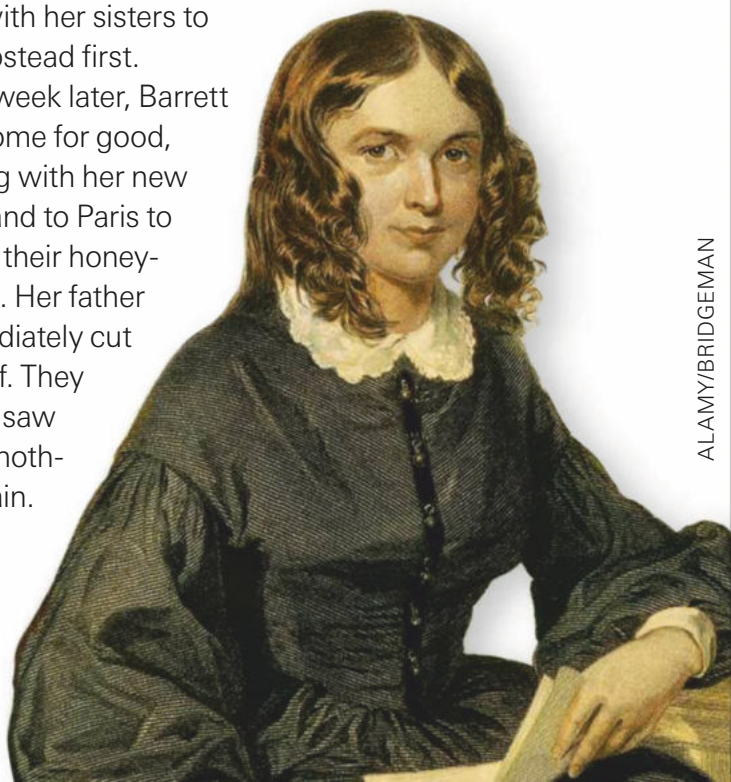
*The two poets' clandestine marriage enrages relatives*

**A**s the poet Elizabeth Barrett sat down to write to her beloved on Saturday, 12 September 1846, she could barely contain her surging feelings. "It all seems like a dream!" she scribbled. "When we drove past that church again... there was a cloud before my eyes."

The church in question was the parish church of St Marylebone, London, where earlier that day Barrett (pictured below) had married her fellow poet Robert Browning. Their courtship, one of the most famous in literary history, had been unconventional to say the least. They had first become acquainted when Browning wrote her a fan letter. They became regular correspondents and fell in love, but there was a problem. Elizabeth knew that her autocratic father was dead set against a match with Browning. Indeed, he even proposed moving to the country to escape "that man" forever.

On the morning of the 12th, accompanied by her faithful maid, Wilson, Elizabeth slipped away from the family home in Wimpole Street to St Marylebone, where she and Browning were quietly married. There was only one other witness: Browning's cousin. Then she returned home – though to suggest that everything was entirely normal, she took a carriage ride with her sisters to Hampstead first.

A week later, Barrett left home for good, fleeing with her new husband to Paris to begin their honeymoon. Her father immediately cut her off. They never saw one another again.



ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN

John II, king of France, surrenders to the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers, in an illustration from the *St Albans Chronicle*. English archers proved to be a deadly asset on the battlefield







## 18 SEPTEMBER 1714

Following the death of his second cousin, Queen Anne, the 54-year-old elector of Hanover lands in Great Britain for his **coronation as George I**



## 19 SEPTEMBER 1356

# The Black Prince smashes his enemies at Poitiers

*Edward, Prince of Wales, captures the French king and emerges victorious*

The summer of 1356 found Edward, Prince of Wales, in typically warlike form. At the age of 26, the Black Prince was in his prime, adored by his fellow Englishmen, but dreaded by his French enemies.

A year earlier, Edward had ravaged much of modern-day Languedoc. Now he set out once again, burning and pillaging, with the vague intention of reaching Normandy, where he hoped to rendezvous with another English army. By early September, his offensive had ground to a halt and he had decided to turn back to Bordeaux. Then, not far from Poitiers, he heard the news that the French king, John II, was just a few miles away with an army of his own, hot on his heels.

Historians still disagree as to whether Edward always meant to confront the French army head-on. In any case, after various manoeuvrings, he drew up his men (numbering, by some estimates, as many as 12,000) behind a long, thick hedge. The French army, which was at least twice as large, planned to attack in three waves, confident that their superior numbers would win the day. But they hadn't accounted for the English bowmen, whose arrows rained down mercilessly from the sky. The first French division was soon routed; the second, which fought fiercely, was pushed back after two hours of brutal fighting. At that, the third division turned and fled. Once again, the Black Prince had carried the day.

Amid the chaos, at least one Frenchman meant to fight on. This was John II himself, surrounded by his royal bodyguard. At last, seeing all was lost, he surrendered to a French-born knight, who promised to lead him to the Black Prince. Edward treated his royal prisoner with great gallantry. "The prince made lowly reverence to the king and caused wine and spices to be brought forth," wrote the chronicler Jean Froissart, "and himself served the king in sign of great love."



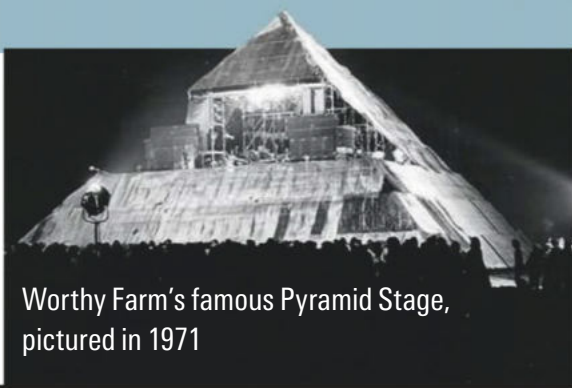
**2 SEPTEMBER 44 BC**

In Rome, statesman and orator Marcus Tullius **Cicero delivers the first of his fiery tirades** attacking the record of his political rival Mark Antony, known as the Philippics

Worthy Farm's famous Pyramid Stage, pictured in 1971

**19 SEPTEMBER 1970**

The **first Glastonbury festival** is held in Somerset, organised by farmer Michael Eavis and headlined by Tyrannosaurus Rex. Tickets cost £1 and include free milk from the farm



Paratroopers fill the skies during the Arnhem campaign, September 1944. The Allied operation in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands failed to achieve its objectives

**17 SEPTEMBER 1944**

## Allies embark on a doomed mission at Arnhem

*Operation Market Garden fails to secure a route over the Rhine*

**F**or John Frost, 17 September 1944 was a day of electric anticipation, grim determination and intense excitement. As commander of the 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, Frost had been given one of the key

tasks in Operation Market Garden, the Allies' daring plan to land airborne troops in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands, seize nine key bridges and punch their way to the Rhine before the Germans realised what had hit them.

Frost's job was to seize the crucial pontoon, railway and road bridge in the centre of Arnhem. He never doubted that he could do it. On the morning of the 17th, he told his batman to pack his beloved golf clubs. Then it was time to prepare for the jump.

At first, everything went according to plan. Early that afternoon, Frost landed safely, used his hunting horn to rally his men and headed for the south side of the road bridge. There, he and his men established their base. One platoon tried to move across the bridge, but they were engaged by the German defenders and beaten back. Frost's men used a flamethrower to repel

their enemies, but the fact remained that they were now stuck.

And worse was to follow. By the following morning, the Germans had sent in SS reinforcements, leaving Frost and his men effectively surrounded. His great hope was that he would soon be relieved by the bulk of the Allied main force, but no such force materialised. He was on his own.

For the next two days, Frost and his men held out, despite punishing German bombardment and a growing realisation that no help was going to arrive. On the early afternoon of the 20th, he was hit in the legs by a German bomb. A few hours later, as the Germans inched ever closer, a fire broke out in Frost's makeshift headquarters. He had no choice but to ask for a ceasefire. The battle for Arnhem was over.





The paddle steamer *Princess Alice* sinks in the Thames, in an image from the *Illustrated London News*

**3 SEPTEMBER 1878**

## Tragedy unfolds on the Thames

*Hundreds are killed as a paddle steamer sinks*

On the evening of 3 September 1878, a paddle steamer ploughed back up the Thames from Sheerness to London. It had been a lovely warm day, and the *Princess Alice* was packed with families who had enjoyed a day out at the seaside. On the main deck, a band was playing. But with so many children sleepy, many parents had chosen to take them inside – a decision that would have terrible consequences.

Some time around 7.30pm, as the ship entered Gallions Reach, its captain suddenly realised that they were on a collision course with a much larger ship coming the other way, the collier *Bywell Castle*. The captain yelled out: “Where are you coming to! Good God! Where are you coming to?” – but it was already too late. With an enormous crunch, the *Bywell Castle* ploughed through the side of the paddle steamer, effectively slicing it into two. Within just five minutes, it had sunk beneath the waves.

Even by London’s standards, the stretch of the Thames where the *Princess Alice* sank was especially foul, with so much sewage that boatmen gagged as they passed through. Now, hundreds of men, women and children floundered desperately in the fetid waters, weighed down by their clothes. Aboard the *Bywell Castle*, crewmen tried to throw them ropes, lifebuoys, even chicken coops to cling on to. But it was no good. It was a horrific scene.

After 10 minutes, the screams died down. The disaster was over, and perhaps 640 people were dead. **H**

**Dominic Sandbrook** is a historian and presenter. His Radio 4 show *The Real Summer of Love* is available at Archive on 4

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# WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER...

## Alexander von Humboldt, an intrepid scientist who reimagined the natural world

BY **ANDREA WULF**

**TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO**, on 14 September 1769, the scientist Alexander von Humboldt was born in Berlin. The son of wealthy aristocrats, he later left his life of privilege behind and spent his fortune on a five-year exploration of South America. This daring journey shaped his life and made him the most famous scientific figure in the world. He was adventurous, restless, relentlessly curious and a visionary thinker.

Humboldt wrote about the “ancient connection” between Africa and South America more than a century before scientists began to discuss shifting tectonic plates, invented isotherms (the wavy lines we still see on weather maps today) or discovered the magnetic equator, and he was the first to talk about global climate and vegetation zones. Most importantly, he came up with a new concept of nature that still shapes our thinking today. Humboldt described Earth as a living organism, and explained that nature was a web of life, an interconnected whole in which everything was bound together – from the smallest insect to the tallest tree. He also understood the devastating effects of deforestation, irrigation and monoculture. Humans, he warned, were destroying the natural world, and he talked as early as 1800 about human-induced climate change.

His ideas influenced scientists, artists, poets and politicians alike. Charles Darwin said that Humboldt was the reason why he boarded the *Beagle*, while the German poet Goethe declared that spending a few days with him was like “having lived several years”. Thomas Jefferson pronounced him “the most scientific man of his age”. Today there are more places, plants and animals named after Humboldt than anyone else – from the Humboldt Current to the Humboldt penguin and even a region on the moon.

He was not only a prescient proto-environmentalist, but also believed in the power of imagination and emotions. At a time when other scientists were searching for universal natural laws, Humboldt insisted that man had to also use his feelings and imagination to understand the natural world. For me, this is one of the most important aspects of his work for us today. As our planet faces irreversible global heating, politicians and

scientists are throwing statistics and numbers at us, but few dare to talk about our awe for nature, or the vulnerable beauty of our planet. We talk about the rising acidity of our oceans but not the poetry of the wild dancing waves; about the atmospheric particles in air pollution but not the glorious smell of a summer meadow after a sudden rain shower.

It’s Humboldt’s emphasis on this emotional relationship to nature that makes him so relevant to our age of the Anthropocene. Maybe now is the perfect moment to turn to this great German naturalist for inspiration. **H**

**// Humboldt talked about climate change as early as 1800 //**



Alexander von Humboldt, painted in c1806, saw nature as an interconnected web of life



**Andrea Wulf’s** latest book is *The Adventures of Alexander von Humboldt* (John Murray)



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## HIDDEN HISTORIES

DAVID OLUSOGA explores lesser-known stories from our past

# // London's rivers have been buried one by one beneath the vast city //

If you stand on the eastbound platform at Sloane Square underground station and look up, you'll notice a large metal tube, painted green and held together with rivets. It cuts across both platforms and train lines, and at first glance looks like a bridge. But its convex underside is a clue to its true function. It's not pedestrians or traffic being carried aloft at Sloane Square station but a river: the Westbourne – one of London's lost waterways.

London today is a city of one river. Yet the Thames, like all great rivers, is fed by her tributaries. Since the 15th century, more than a dozen of these streams and rivers, which once wound their way visibly through the capital, have been entombed, buried one by one beneath the vast and ever-changing metropolis. The names of London's lost rivers – attached to streets, landmarks and pubs – are often the only evidence of their passing.

The river Walbrook was probably the first waterway to be banished from sight. This modest stream was perhaps three or four metres wide, rising from present day Finsbury and flowing south-west, under the Bank of England, to join the Thames by Cannon Street railway bridge.

The most famous of London's lost rivers is the Fleet, once the biggest of the Thames' tributaries: a navigable tidal inlet with its own estuary. Now, much diminished, it takes a subterranean route under Kentish Town and Camden to Kings Cross, passing through Farringdon and

joining the Thames via an anonymous drainage outlet in the embankment wall under Blackfriars Bridge. Its story of decline tracks the growth of London's population. Even in medieval times, the tendency of local people to use the river as a latrine and rubbish tip meant its waters were filthy, foul-smelling and prone to clogging up. The butchers of Smithfield made things worse by dumping offal in the water, and by the early 18th century the 'Fleet Ditch' was a stinking sewer. In the 1730s, the upper part of the canal was 'enclosed' and Fleet Market constructed over it.

In piecemeal fashion, stretches of other rivers were enclosed, like the Tyburn river, once renowned for its salmon, which flows from South Hampstead through Regent's Park, under Buckingham Palace, turning east to join the Thames just north of Westminster. And the river Effra in south London, which originates in Norwood and moves through Brixton, past the Oval to Vauxhall Bridge. Typically the filthiest, downstream sections, which served as sewers, were buried first, but in the Victorian era the rest of the capital's watercourses were also doomed.

In the first years of the 19th century, Lord Byron is said to have swam in the Thames by Westminster Bridge. But by the 1830s, the sheer volume of waste produced by the expanding metropolis overwhelmed its infrastructure, bringing cholera epidemics. The 1858 Great Stink sealed the fate of the remaining waterways, and they were hidden away with earlier lost rivers, many of which were incorporated into Joseph Bazalgette's modern sewerage system.

Londoners of previous eras were delighted to be rid of the fetid waters, but from today's

vantage point the entombment of the capital's rivers is a sad story. Nostalgia leads some to dream of their resurrection. It's called 'daylighting' – un-burying old streams and rivers – and several organisations are pushing to realise these plans. Internationally, there are precedents – though the Tyburn, which runs under some of the UK's most expensive real estate, seems an unlikely candidate for exhumation. **H**

### Bridge over troubled water

Workers perform repairs on London's river Fleet sewer in 1854. Once open-air, the Thames's largest tributary descended into a public latrine and rubbish tip, leading to its enclosure



David Olusoga is professor of public history at the University of Manchester and the presenter of several BBC documentaries



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# LETTERS

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### Not just for mobsters

When Winston Churchill was photographed in the early months of the Second World War, smoking his familiar cigar and handling a Tommy gun (*David Olusoga's Hidden Histories*, August), there were reportedly not more than 40 such weapons in the whole of Britain. Later in the war they became more extensively available and were supplied to British special forces, notably commandos.

The Thompson submachine gun (TSMG) was essentially a close-quarters weapon firing a .45 calibre bullet with an effective range of not more than 50 yards. It was best used by firing in controlled bursts – not by spraying bullets all over the place as often depicted in Hollywood gangster films.

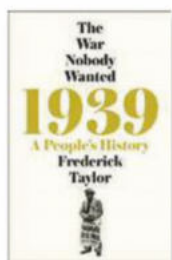
I carried a TSMG for two years (1944–45) throughout campaigns in France, Holland and Germany. In military terms it was a highly useful weapon, but it never entirely shook off its 'mobster' image.

Lord Louis Mountbatten, in a broadcast shortly after the war, stated that the public's general perception of a commando soldier seemed to be something akin to a Chicago gangster, and that nothing could be further from the case. A few years before he died he also commented to this writer, smiling as he spoke: "During the war, when I was chief of combined operations, I sometimes had to persuade people in high places that commandos weren't people who'd been specially let out of jail."

**Bryan Samain**, Suffolk



Winston Churchill with a Tommy gun during an inspection of invasion defences near Hartlepool, 1940



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is Frederick Taylor's *1939: A People's History*. Read the review on page 78.

### Trafalgar is not overrated

While Sam Willis is correct that Trafalgar did not guarantee victory over Napoleon (*Trafalgar: An Overrated Victory*, August), it was surely one of those naval triumphs, repeated throughout our history, which ensured that a continental power was unable to threaten our homeland with a successful invasion, and therefore allowed us to eventually win the wider war.

Drake's destruction of the Spanish Armada, the ability of the Grand Fleet (despite a hiccup at Jutland) to bottle up the High Seas Fleet, and the combined power of the RAF and the Royal Navy to frustrate Hitler are all part, with Trafalgar, of this centuries-long capacity to preserve our freedom. Nelson's success was far from overrated, as it was necessary to ensure we would emerge on the winning side.

**Colin Bullen**, Kent

### A battle that saved Britain

The article about the battle of Trafalgar being overrated is inaccurate. As shown in the article's timeline, from 1803 Napoleon built up the Armée d'Angleterre at Boulogne with many barges to transport his army for the invasion of Britain. However, he needed the French fleet to protect the vulnerable barges when they crossed the Channel, and after the destruction of the fleet at Trafalgar there was no protection available. The result was that Napoleon had to cancel his invasion. So what the magazine cover calls a "futile" victory was the opposite, and it saved Britain.

**Roger Stretton**, Suffolk

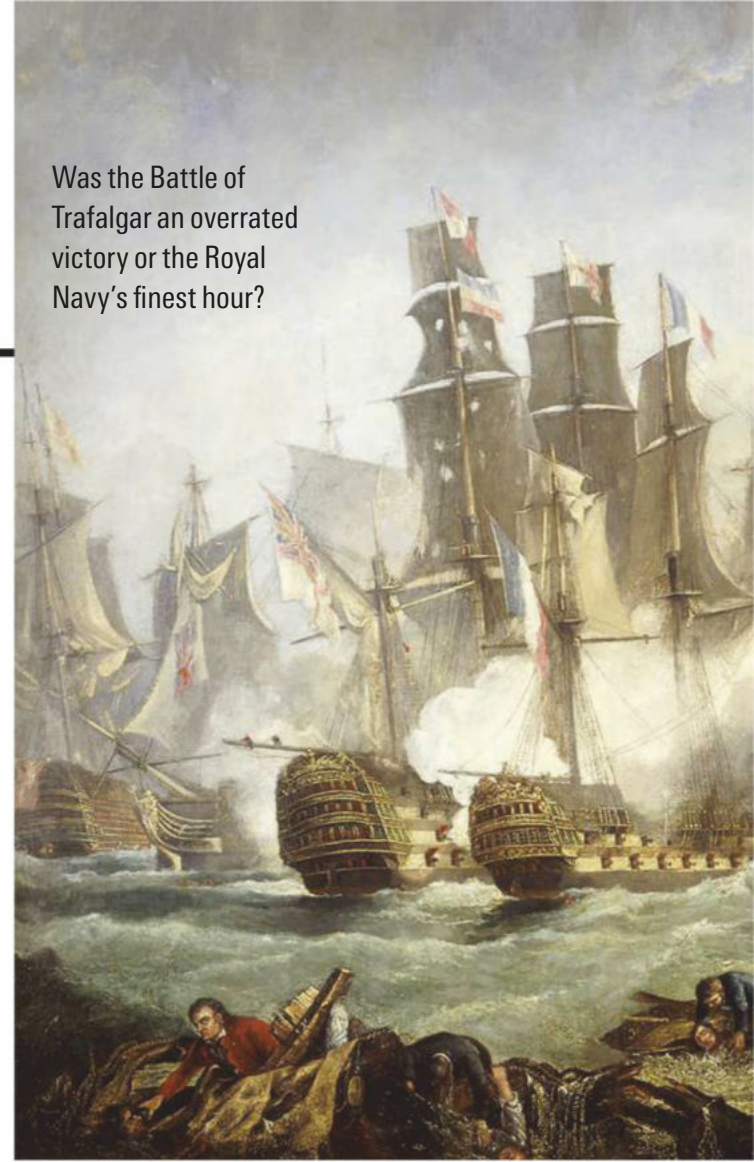
### Time to end the blame game?

On the letters page of the June issue, Elizabeth Twine says that England should apologise for Amritsar. Meanwhile, in the *History in the News* section, it is reported that the president of Mexico is asking for an apology for the abuses carried out during the Spanish conquest.

The problem is, once you start the blame game, where do you stop, as it's a never-ending circle? How far back in history do you go? What should be included and what should be left out? Examples could start with the Romans, then the Vikings, the Barbary pirates and every abuse committed by every country involved in the two world wars.

Hard though it is, we must accept that bad things have happened throughout history, and will continue to happen, as each generation fails to learn from the mistakes made by previous ones. To quote

Was the Battle of Trafalgar an overrated victory or the Royal Navy's finest hour?



LP Hartley: "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."

**Georgina Hawke**, Reading

### A forgotten massacre

Your article on the 1941 conflict in Iraq (*The Forgotten Iraq War*, July) is a timely reminder of the deadly threat the Nazis posed in the Middle East. However, it blithely smoothed over the immediate aftermath of the British victory at Habbaniya. Baghdad, long inundated with fierce anti-Semitic propaganda, saw a two-day pogrom against the city's Jewish community, that led to hundreds of dead and wounded, and the systematic looting of pre-marked Jewish houses and businesses.

This pogrom was made possible by a vacuum of power that followed the collapse of the Nazi-backed regime, and the delayed entry of British forces to the city. This fatal delay, and the role Kinahan Cornwallis, the



The Jewish quarter of Baghdad, 1925. Many Jews were murdered following the 1941 war in Iraq

GETTY IMAGES/TOPFOTO





British ambassador to Iraq, played in causing it, have never been fully explained.  
**Eyal Meltzer**, Israel

### A worthy commemoration

I object to your reference to the battle of the Boyne as a “sectarian brawl” (*Anniversaries*, July). The Glorious Revolution cemented the primacy of parliament over the monarch, preserved Magna Carta and established the Bill of Rights and Toleration Act, which form the basis of the freedom and democracy we enjoy today. Furthermore the contemporary pope supported William of Orange, sent troops to fight beside him and had the Vatican lit up in celebration of his victory. If there’s an event that deserves its annual commemoration, surely this is it?  
**Patrick Walker**, Londonderry

### Lessons from da Vinci

I was interested to read the Letter of the Month (July) regarding Leonardo da Vinci’s drawings of the heart, which inspired Dr Francis Wells to carry out mitral valve repairs. I’m one of the lucky ones he operated on, and can I say how wonderful his staff were in supporting him and me. It just goes to show that we always learn from history, despite some thinking they know better!  
**Andy Bullen**, Norfolk

### WRITE TO US

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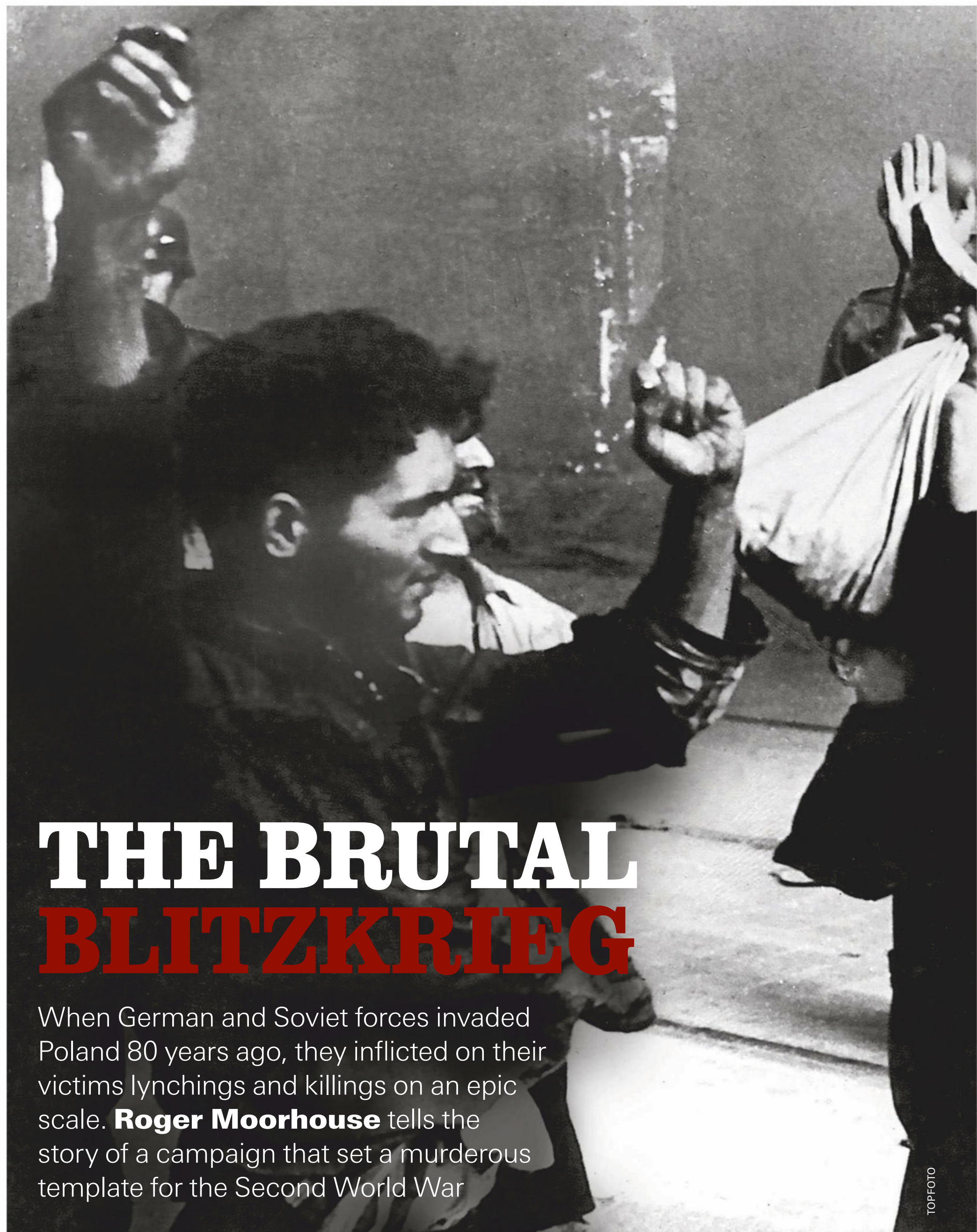
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# THE BRUTAL BLITZKRIEG

When German and Soviet forces invaded Poland 80 years ago, they inflicted on their victims lynchings and killings on an epic scale. **Roger Moorhouse** tells the story of a campaign that set a murderous template for the Second World War





**Brutality begins**

Jews stand with hands up before German soldiers in Warsaw, 1939. The Germans carried out more than 600 massacres during the invasion of Poland – an average of over 16 a day



Far from the front lines, the people of the city of Przemyśl in south-eastern Poland might have thought themselves remote from the German invasion of their country in September 1939.

Such cosy assumptions would soon be confounded, however. And when the invaders arrived on 15 September, they quickly showed the new face of warfare.

Soon after, the Jews of Przemyśl began to be rounded up. Initially, they were abused and humiliated by German soldiers, but the persecution swiftly turned murderous. In time, the soldiers hounded a crowd of Jewish men towards a nearby cemetery, raining blows and kicks down on the unfortunates, pistol-whipping those who fell behind.

When the Jews arrived, they saw a Wehrmacht truck, on which the canvas cover was drawn back to reveal a heavy machine gun. Burst after burst of gunfire rang out, sweeping back and forth until the men stopped writhing. Then the soldiers departed and the process began again. In all, over three days, some 600 of Przemyśl's Jews would be murdered. It was, according to one eyewitness, "like a scene from Dante's hell".

The German invasion of Poland, which began on 1 September 1939, opened the

Second World War in Europe, yet it nonetheless remains a subject mired in misunderstanding. Aside from the hoary old myths of the feckless Poles sending their cavalymen to engage German armour, little else seems to have penetrated the popular narrative.

One way of rectifying such a lack of knowledge might be to point out the remarkable brutality that was meted out to the Polish population during the campaign. Of course, actions against Europe's Jews, like that at Przemyśl, were grimly commonplace during the war. But readers might be surprised to learn that the victims in 1939 were not only Polish Jews, and the perpetrators were not only the Germans; Soviet forces, too, contributed their part to the murderous climate.

Dehumanised stereotype

Anti-Semitism was clearly the driver behind some German atrocities. For many German soldiers, Poland represented their first exposure to Jewish populations that appeared to approximate to the dehumanised stereotype presented by Nazi propaganda. Their response was predictably brutal. At Końskie, German troops fired into a crowd of Jews who had been rounded up to dig graves, killing 22. At Błonie, west of Warsaw, 50 Jews were massacred; at Pułtusk a further 80. There are numerous other examples.

Seventy-two Poles were massacred by the Germans in response to the death of two horses in a friendly fire incident

But, all Poles – whether Jewish or not – were under threat in 1939. Executions of PoWs were not uncommon. At Ciepielów, 300 Polish prisoners were machine-gunned after a brief engagement halted the progress of the German 15th Motorised Infantry Regiment. Perhaps the worst example occurred at Śladów, where 358 Poles – soldiers and civilians – were massacred on the banks of the river Vistula, following the failure of the Polish counter-attack on the river Bzura.

Inevitably, however, it was civilians who bore the brunt of the killing. In one example, 12 'partisans' were executed in revenge for the killing of a German officer: the youngest was aged 10. In Wyszanów, 17 women and children were killed when grenades were thrown into a cellar, despite the victims' pleas

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TIMELINE Poland's agony, 1939  
How Hitler and Stalin dismembered a nation

**23 August**  
The signing of the **Nazi-Soviet Pact** in Moscow gives the green light to Hitler and Stalin's aggressive ambitions in eastern Europe.

**31 August**  
A number of **'false flag' operations** on the Polish frontier – blamed on Polish troops but actually carried out by the SS – give Hitler his excuse to invade.

**1 September**  
At dawn, **German forces invade Poland** from the north, west and south. In the air, the Luftwaffe targets towns and cities as well as airfields of the Polish Air Force.



Adolf Hitler watches German troops in central Poland, 11 September

**25 August**  
**The Anglo-Polish Agreement** of Mutual Assistance is signed, promising **military aid** in the event that either nation is the victim of aggression by a third party.



Britain's declaration of war is read out from London's Royal Exchange

**3 September**  
After their ultimatum to Hitler goes unanswered, **Britain and France declare war** on Germany in line with the agreements that they have concluded with Poland.

**9 September**  
In the largest engagement of the campaign, Polish forces **launch a counterattack** against the Germans along the Bzura river. After over a week of fighting, the attack stalls.





### The whip hand

German troops cross a bridge during the Poland campaign. German soldiers' diaries often labelled the Poles as "filthy" and "uncivilised"

for mercy. Farmers were particularly at risk, given that they often possessed some sort of weapon and could thus easily be labelled as partisans. Eighteen were murdered after the defence of Uniejów, for example; a further 24 were executed at Wylazłów.

In truth, any pretext sufficed. Forty Poles were massacred at Szymankowo after a German surprise attack was thwarted; another 50 were killed at Sulejówek in retaliation for the death of a single German officer. In one shocking example, 72 Poles

were massacred by the Germans at Kajetanowice in response to the death of two horses in a friendly fire incident.

There were many drivers of this brutalisation. Contemporary German accounts bemoaned the inexperience of German soldiers, whose "nervousness and anxiety" had resulted in so many shootings and wanton destruction.

The nature of the warfare must also have contributed. Though Blitzkrieg was not yet German military doctrine, the campaign in

Poland was often marked by swift advances that disrupted a more static Polish defence, thereby causing many defenders to be left behind the line, where continued resistance could easily be interpreted as the work of bandits and irregulars.

There may also have been a pharmacological explanation for the brutal treatment of prisoners. 'Pervitin', a tablet form of methamphetamine, which produced improvements in energy, alertness and self-confidence, was increasingly popular among German soldiers at that time. The military benefits are obvious, but there can also be little doubt that – by lowering inhibitions – the drug also made soldiers more likely to commit atrocities.

Yet, valid though they may be, such explanations can only ever give a fraction of the story. In this regard, a comparison with the French campaign of the following summer is instructive. There, German troops were still comparatively inexperienced, Pervitin was still widely available, and Blitzkrieg was arguably used to greater effect. But there were far fewer atrocities. The 46 days of the French campaign saw around 25 massacres of PoWs and civilians, including those at Le Paradis, Wormhoudt and Vinkt.

In the 36 days of the September campaign, by comparison, there were more than 600 massacres carried out by the Germans alone;

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### 17 September

At dawn, **Stalin's Red Army invades Poland** from the east, engaging lightly armed border troops. Despite the propaganda narrative of heralding liberation, the invasion brought class war, occupation and annexation.

### 22 September

In the eastern city of Brest-Litovsk, German forces cede the district to Soviet rule, as agreed under a protocol to the **Nazi-Soviet Pact**. Before they do so, they hold a joint military parade with Red Army forces.

German and Soviet officers at the joint military parade in Brest



### 29 September

After the fall of Warsaw, the fortress complex at Modlin, north-west of the capital, also **surrenders to the Germans**.

A German anti-tank cannon outside Warsaw, 23 September



### 25 September

German artillery and air forces carry out an intense, **day-long bombardment of Warsaw – 'Black Monday'** – resulting in an estimated 10,000 dead.

### 28 September

Wishing to end the bloodshed, the Polish garrison in **Warsaw agrees to surrender the city to the Germans**. More than 140,000 Polish troops march into captivity.

### 6 October

Following a four-day battle, the **'Polesie Independent Operational Group'** surrenders to the Germans at Kock, south-east of Warsaw. It is the final engagement of the Polish campaign.





**Humiliated** A civilian shaves a Jewish man's beard while German soldiers look on. Anti-Semitism was the driver behind many atrocities during the Poland campaign



**Death from above** Poles watch German planes in action over Warsaw. More than 10,000 died in just one day in a combined air and artillery attack on the city

an average of over 16 per day. Even allowing for embellishment, the disparity is astonishing, and surely points to a more fundamental factor driving German behaviour.

Clues are abundant in the letters and diaries of German soldiers, many of whom described the Poles as “uncivilised”, “filthy”, “a rabble”; in short, as one soldier confessed, barely human. Such attitudes, though catalysed and radicalised by Nazi propaganda, were nothing new, but crucially the war gave the green light to their violent expression. And if the enemy was perceived in this manner, it was easy for conventional morals and behaviours to be suspended. As one soldier wrote: “The Poles behave in an unhuman way. Who can blame us for using harsher methods?” It was a neat euphemism for racially motivated murder.

### A belligerent liberation

While the Germans imported race war to western Poland, the Soviets brought class war to the east. The Kremlin had sold its invasion of eastern Poland – carried out on 17 September in line with the Nazi-Soviet Pact – as a “liberation”, but it was decidedly belligerent, with half a million combat troops and nearly 5,000 tanks confronting the lightly armed forces of the Polish border protection corps.

For those Poles who fell under Soviet control, there was no doubt about the Red Army's

revolutionary intentions. In countless towns and villages, Soviet officers goaded the masses to rise up against their “lords and oppressors”, to seize property and “avenge the pain of exploitation with blood”.

Local communist militias quickly complied, targeting landowners and local officials. Victims were simply dragged from their beds and lynched, or beaten to death. One court official was tied by his feet to a horse and cart, which was then driven around the cobbled streets until he was dead.

Prisoners of war were also sorted according to their social class. Officers were routinely separated from other ranks for interrogation, along with those who were especially well dressed, or well equipped. In time, with so many escaping the net by shedding their uniforms or pulling off their rank insignia, the Soviets began checking their prisoners' hands. *Beloruchki* – those with white, uncalloused palms – were clearly not from the working class, and so were also detained.

Many of them were then taken to prisons where they would be stripped of everything they had – watches, razors, belts – before being packed into cattle cars for the long journey eastward to an unknown fate. For some, at least, it was a journey that would end in the death pits of Katyn forest.

In some cases, Soviet class fury would be assuaged more immediately. Like the Germans,

## The murder of 22,000 Polish officers demonstrated that the Soviets aimed at wholesale social revolution

the Red Army was content – in the name of ideology – to forego the moral norms of warfare. A group of injured Polish prisoners taken near Wytyczno, for instance, was locked in the town hall and denied medical assistance. By the time help arrived the following day, all of them had bled to death.

Officers were often simply taken to one side and executed. When Polish prisoners heard a volley of gunfire after their surrender at Mokran, one of them asked his Red Army escort whether fighting was still going on. He was told: “Those are your masters, shot dead in Mokran forest.”

One of those similarly dispatched was the commander of the Polish garrison at Grodno, General Józef Olszyna-Wilczyński, who was captured by Soviet soldiers on 22 September. Taken to one side, along with his adjutant, he was executed, and his bloodstained effects were handed to his wife, who had been travelling with him. Inspecting his body, she

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**Grim discoveries**  
German soldiers examine mass graves in the Katyń forest, 1943. The graves contained the remains of some of the 22,000 Polish officers shot by the Soviets in 1940



**Red terror** A collaborationist poster from France in 1943 warns that the Katyń massacre will be repeated “everywhere” if the Soviets win the war

recalled: “He was still warm, but there was no life left in him.”

The true scale of Soviet persecution of Polish prisoners and civilians is unknown; the Kremlin’s propaganda and its rigid control of the media and of memory meant that many accounts would have died with the surviving witnesses, in Polish prisons, or in the gulags of Siberia.

Yet, the political intention – and the scale of the ambition behind it – can be gauged by the Katyń massacres of the following year. The murder of 22,000 Polish officers taken

prisoner during the September campaign – executed by their Soviet captors – demonstrated that the Soviets aimed at nothing less than a social revolution.

Those victims, like Olszyna-Wilczyński before them, represented the Polish elite: army officers, doctors, lawyers, intellectuals, indeed all those who were seen as the best able to foster and coordinate resistance against Soviet rule. Their wholesale elimination was – to the gentlemen of the Kremlin – an essential precondition for the successful communisation of Polish society. Murder, then, was not carried out in a haphazard manner, or in the heat of battle. It was an ideologically driven necessity.

### Barbarism backdated

It is often suggested that the true barbarisation of warfare in the Second World War began with the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, when German death squads inflicted their murderous racial ideology on the helpless populations of Ukraine and Belarus. There is something to be said for that argument, of course, not least because German military domination was then at its highest, and that is when the Holocaust began in earnest.

Yet we should perhaps backdate the start of that barbarisation process to September 1939, to a campaign that has been routinely overlooked by historians as a sideshow, an irrelevant prelude to the momentous events that followed.

The Polish campaign was far from militarily insignificant, however. It saw the grim

debut of many of the methods that would later earn dark renown: indiscriminate bombing, the deliberate targeting of civilian populations, and – most notably of all – the Blitzkrieg itself, the doctrine of movement, using armoured spearheads to prevent the creation of a coherent phased defence.

Aside from those nefarious innovations, it is perhaps the aspect of barbarisation that deserves the closest scrutiny. Barbarisation was not a consequence of the opening years of the war, a creeping radicalisation in which inhibitions were gradually shed and ideologies were allowed free rein. Rather it was there from the start, a key driver of Germany’s early military successes and an essential component of the racist ideology that underpinned Hitler’s ‘New World Order’.

Crucially, too, the September campaign reminds us that it was not only the Germans who subscribed to a revolutionary world view; it was not only Hitler’s army that sought to advance its ideological goals at the point of its bayonets. In that respect, Stalin’s Red Army had just as much blood on its hands as the Wehrmacht. **H**

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**Roger Moorhouse’s** new book, *First to Fight: The Polish War 1939*, will be published by Bodley Head in September. He will be discussing the invasion of Poland at both of our History Week-ends: [historyextra.com/events](http://historyextra.com/events)

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### Dire straits

Beggars are depicted in a woodcut. In the 16th century, waves of crop failures persuaded the government to place poor relief on the statute book



Beggars Bush

A Haundering Begger

A gallant Begger

# Taxing the rich to feed the poor

In Queen Elizabeth I's reign, parliament took a radical decision: to force the wealthy to support their impoverished neighbours. The result, writes

**Jonathan Healey**, was the world's first national welfare state, releasing thousands from the grip of starvation



In the summer of 1674, Jane Shaw left her tiny hamlet of Thrang, and headed south. She passed through the green pastures of north Lancashire, skirting the edge of the sandy expanse of Morecambe Bay. Arriving in Lancaster, she trudged up the hill to the castle – a medieval fortress and prison that stood solemn guard over the ancient town. She passed through the tall, forbidding castle gates, and waited her turn. For she had come to attend court, and she had come with a petition.

She was, she said, a poor widow, left in debt by her late husband. She had five children; some were too little to look after themselves, others were unable to find work. If she wasn't given support, she claimed, then she couldn't maintain her family "in any comfortable manner". Seven of her neighbours added their names.

Amazingly, Shaw's petition survives. Although she almost certainly didn't write it, it allows her to tell her story, or at least a version of it: a story of poverty, hardship, and the difficult life of a single mother in an unforgiving world. But she got her dole.

A note at the bottom of the petition, added by a clerk of the court, gives the details: she was to receive 12 pence a week. It was probably enough to ensure she survived.

### Shattered charity

The origins of the English Poor Law, the system to which Jane Shaw turned for support, lay well before 1674. Perhaps the first piece of the jigsaw was the development of an idea, from the late Middle Ages, that the state should work to improve society – that it should have a social policy. The Reformation was another factor: the monasteries had provided charity, and the chantries and guilds (abolished under Edward VI) had supported hospitals, schools and almshouses. It's been estimated that half of these foundations collapsed as a result of the Reformation – an irreversible shattering of the medieval landscape of charity.

Worse was to come. In the 16th century, the English population started to grow. In 1500 it was around 2.2 million. By 1600 it had topped 4 million.

This was a disaster for the poor. They were squeezed in the vice-like grip of rising rents and food prices, and falling wages. The 1590s was one of the most difficult decades to be English and impoverished. Many took to the roads, tramping towards the towns, squatting in dirty suburbs, demonised by the press. When the harvests failed, many starved – or ended their lives at the end of a rope for theft, victims of a brutal criminal code that operated to protect the property-owners.

For the first time in recorded history, a state had created a national system of tax-funded poor relief

And yet, there were also calls for charity. People listened. Even many fairly humble folk, with little to give, remembered the poor in their wills. For the wealthy, the bequest of land, property, or even the foundation of an almshouse was a way to display virtue. In Winchester, the merchant Peter Symonds left money to create Christ's Hospital, for the poor, at his death in 1586. His family argued over the will, but the almshouse finally went up in 1607. It even used bricks (visible today) from the nearby Hyde Abbey: a neat allegory for the passing of responsibility from monasteries to private almshouses.

Such charities remained important, but gradually the 16th century saw more direction from the state, and more emphasis on compulsory poor rates. Towns were in the vanguard. At Norwich, for example, under the direction of local Puritans, there were attempts to stamp out drunkenness and other vices, combined with a massive drive to relieve the needy poor and provide employment and training for their children.

But it was parliament that played the decisive role. At first, it encouraged voluntary charity, but this proved insufficient, so gradually it introduced compulsory taxation, with statutes in 1563 and 1572. It was a drastic solution – wealthy parishioners were to be forced (not encouraged, *forced*) to support their poorer neighbours. The crucial legislation came in 1598, ordering each parish to appoint "overseers of the poor" who would ensure those who needed work would be employed, and those who couldn't work would get cash. The system that evolved from the Tudor statutes was both deceptively simple, and startlingly radical. For the first time in recorded history, a state had created a national system of tax-funded poor relief, at least on paper.

By 1600, this system was fanning out across the countryside. In Hampshire there is a surviving document that shows poor rates being collected in the tiny parish of Micheldever in 1599. By 1605, a survey of much of north Hampshire shows rates were nearly universal there, and this was probably typical of the rural south (where, as the historian Marjorie McIntosh has shown, some parishes had been collecting rates well before 1598). In the north, things were slower. In Rochdale, for example, rates only started in 1626; in much of what's now south Cumbria, they were only fully adopted in the 1630s.

The wheels, though, nearly came off during the first Civil War (1642–46). Sometimes parish governments stopped meeting, sometimes the overseers were simply all dead. In any case, by 1646 there were complaints that the poor were no longer getting support. What's worse, England was beginning to slip

### A sorry sight

A London beggar shown in an engraving from 1688. The records suggest that many of those applying for poor relief were either ill, old or had too many children to support







### A hand-up for the hard-up

Food is distributed to the hungry (left) and drink to the thirsty (right) in two segments of the 1504 painting *The Seven Works of Mercy*. In the 16th century, giving to the poor was seen as a way of showing virtue

into famine. While political revolution gripped the nation, in the background, England was hit by a series of terrible harvests. This had happened before: in 1623, harvest failure in the north had led to a huge surge in mortality. But the crisis of the late 1640s had the potential to be much worse, not least because there was now a massive army circling London, sucking away its food.

The response was a nationwide effort to kick the system back to life. Where it had faltered, rates were re-instigated and overseers re-appointed. Where it had survived, rates were increased. In the end, it worked. The years 1646–49 saw bad harvests, but there was no famine; the one that struck in 1623 was to be England's last.

### Pensions for the poor

As the Civil War receded into memory, the Poor Law entered something of a golden age. The law of 'settlement' had now been codified, ensuring that every English man, woman and child had a parish to which they

had the right to apply for relief.

It is from this period that the accounts of overseers of the poor start to survive in large numbers: incredible lists of England's poor, together with information about their support from the parish purse. Some got pensions, others had their rents paid, or received various doles for occasional expenses, such as medical care, fuel, even house repairs. Using these, historians have shown that many of the poor were either old or in families with lots of children. Others were ill or had long-term disabilities.

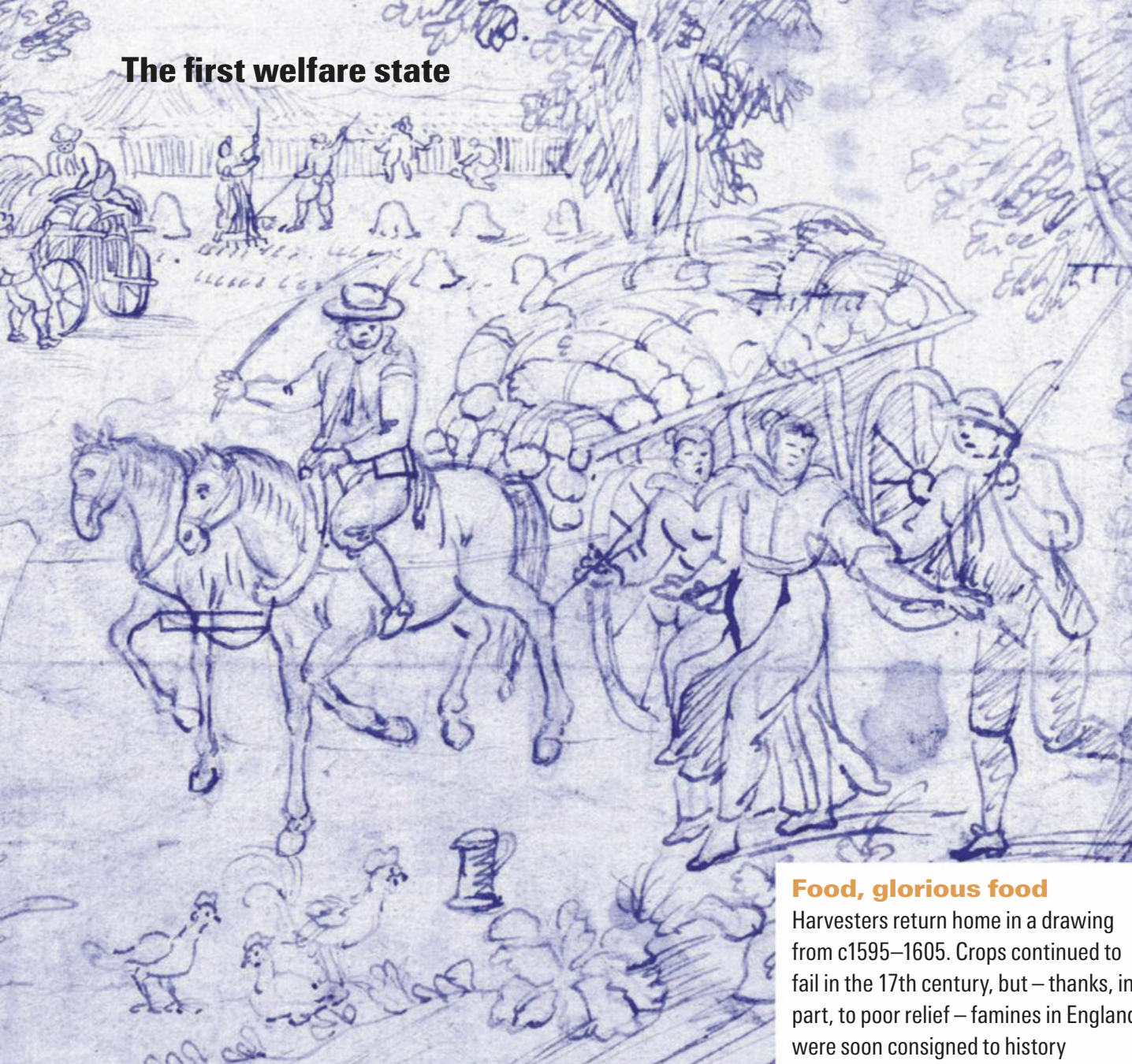
We also have petitions. Lancashire, in particular, has an astonishing collection of several thousand. In it are sad stories of poverty and hardship that would otherwise be lost – lives of struggle and survival. Like George and Catherine Horner of Claughton, who in 1680 described themselves as having "been very laborious in all their time but are now grown old and decrepit and reduced to much poverty and indigence". The Claughtons added proudly that they "never (as yet)

was in any ways troublesome to the parish wherein they live". Or Anthony Higgenson of Priest Hutton, who had made a living by catching foxes, badgers "and other devouring creatures", until old age and sickness intervened in 1656. Or Thomas Somester of Chadderton, a linen weaver, who in 1676 said that his wife had been sick, and that some of their eight children also suffered from "the fever". Worse, two years ago, when things had been "hard and dear", they'd had to sell most of their goods, and now they were poor.

The Poor Law wasn't designed to give total support to those who had fallen on hard times. The evidence we have shows clearly that the poor also used various means to scratch a living: they were helped by family and neighbours; they did little bits of work; they sold their household goods, even the clothes off their backs. They gathered sticks, turf, reeds and stones; they collected nuts, berries and shellfish. They might graze a pig or even a cow; or they might fish in rivers, lakes and fens. In extreme circumstances,



## The first welfare state



### Food, glorious food

Harvesters return home in a drawing from c1595–1605. Crops continued to fail in the 17th century, but – thanks, in part, to poor relief – famines in England were soon consigned to history

## Critics claimed that too much was being spent on poor relief, and that this encouraged idleness

they might even succumb to the temptations of petty theft. They lived, in the beautifully evocative phrase of the historian Olwen Hufton, in an “economy of makeshifts”.

### The strong helping the weak

Yet the role of the Poor Law was definitely growing. Its costs were rising as more people got relief, and doles got bigger. Whereas the normal pension was about sixpence a week in the 1630s, by the 1690s it was about 12 pence. Parish accounts usually show gradual increases. Slimbridge in Gloucestershire spent under £59 on the Poor Law in 1635, rising to nearly £87 in 1690. At Cerne Abbas in the Dorset downs, costs rose from just over £24 in 1632 to nearly £100 in 1695. All told, expenditure across England probably at least tripled in the second half of the 17th century, and since the population was flat, this meant real improvements in the lives of the poor.

Not for nothing did the later 17th century see some of the earliest complaints that, now,

*too much* was being spent. Critics argued that this would encourage idleness, or would discourage ratepayers from giving voluntary charity. On a local level, there might be complaints about individual paupers. Sometimes these related to moral failings on the pauper’s part: Agnes Braithwaite of Hawkshead was said to have become an “idle, abusive, drunken woman” thanks to her dole. More often, they were simply said not to need support, like Mary Ashton of Hest Bank, who was “a woman of an able body and fit to work for her own maintenance”, she having just one child “who is able to work for himself”.

Ultimately, though, there was a growing assumption that – if you were destitute enough – you should be relieved by your parish. At some point, indeed, people started to believe they had a right to poor relief. Historians have debated when this belief arose; some prefer the late 18th century. But there are signs it was emerging much earlier.

Perhaps the last word can be left to Jane Shaw, or at least to the person who actually wrote her petition. It asks that relief be granted, because “the strong should help the weak, the rich should help the poor”. This was not, of course, a completely new sentiment. What was different was that now this duty could be enforced by the state. **H**

Jonathan Healey is associate professor in social history at Oxford University. He is author of *The First Century of Welfare: Poverty and Poor Relief in Lancashire* (Boydell, 2014)

## HARD LUCK STORIES

Three paupers who fell on the state’s mercy

### THREE PECKS OF OATMEAL

**Ralph Standish**, a collier from Anderton, asked for relief in 1691, saying that although he was only 27 last May it had “pleased God to visit him with a sad distemper in his knee and leg”. He could no longer walk, and despite spending all his means getting help from doctors, he could no longer earn a living, bringing him into “great poverty and want”. Despite the fact he’d been of “good government and carriage”, all the overseers had given him was three pecks of oatmeal and a shilling in cash. He asked for “some reasonable relief”.

### A CARER’S CRISIS

**Thomas Rothwell** of Blackley, near Manchester, asked for help in 1654. He was known locally as ‘Tom Cook’, and this reflected one of his three occupations: he was a cook, a gardener and a farmer. But he was getting old. He was now 73 and losing his sight, while his wife was “lunatic and distracted”, and needed constant care. He had spent all his previous earnings trying to avoid calling on the overseers, but now, he said, he had no choice.

### THE ABUSIVE NEIGHBOUR?

**Agnes Braithwaite** of Hawkshead (now Cumbria) waged a long battle with the overseers for a dole in the first decade of the 18th century. She was an old widow, probably in her late 70s, but her neighbours alleged that she was idle, drunken, abusive and litigious, and in any case was fit to work. Several times her dole was reduced, but the overseers were never able to stop it completely, and she died in receipt of a parish pension.



Death stalks an old man in a Holbein woodcut from 1538

BRIDGEMAN





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# The **real**

## **Men of violence**

From the archives of the West Midlands Police Museum, late 19th and early 20th-century 'lock-up mugshots' show style-conscious villains staring down the camera. Such men left a lasting folk memory in Birmingham, which writer Steven Knight drew upon when he created *Peaky Blinders*





# Peaky Blinders

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE MUSEUM/SWNS

At the end of the 19th century, the law-abiding citizens of Birmingham were terrorised by a new breed of gang member with two defining passions: natty streetwear and extreme violence. **Andrew Davies** reveals why so many young, working-class men were drawn to the brutal glamour of the peaky blinders





## Real-life peaky blinders

"Surely all respectable and law-abiding citizens are sick of the very name of ruffianism in Birmingham and assaults on police. No matter what part of the city one walks, gangs of 'peaky blinders' are to be seen, who oftentimes think nothing of grossly insulting passers by, be it a man, woman or child. I venture to say that 99 times out of 100, they are not even brought to justice." This anguished letter, signed "Workman", was published in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* on 21 July 1898.

'Peaky blinders' were easily recognised. Contrary to the myth that grew in later decades – and the BBC drama series – they did not wear caps lined with razors. In fact, they wore 'billycock' or bowler-style hats, made of hard felt, with a rakish, curved rim, two-and-a-half inches wide. They moulded the brims of their hats into a point, worn tilted over one eye – hence their nickname. They did not belong to a single gang. Quite the reverse: opposing gangs, all sharing this outlandish style, sought each other out on the streets of Birmingham and in late-night confrontations outside the city's music halls. The term peaky blinder, adopted in the 1890s, was distinctive to Birmingham. In Manchester and neighbouring Salford, gang members were known as 'scuttlers'. In London, they became known by the more enduring label 'hooligan'.

The frustration of 'Workman' was understandable. Three days earlier, Police Constable George Snipe had been fatally injured in a disturbance that shocked the city. PC Snipe and a fellow constable named Mead were patrolling a poor district to the north of the city centre between 9.30pm and 10pm when they 'moved on' a group of six or seven young 'roughs' who had gathered outside the Tram Stores pub in Hockley Hill. As one member of the group later admitted, the men had spent the day, a Sunday, on a spree, "drinking all the day, and fighting all the evening". The constables followed the men to the junction of Bridge Street West, where PC Snipe arrested 23-year-old William Colerain for using vile language. When the two constables tried to take Colerain in, he kicked out and the prisoner's friends attempted to rescue him. A crowd gathered. In the ensuing melee, someone hurled a brick at PC Snipe's head with such force that it knocked his helmet off. The stricken constable was taken by cab to the city's General Hospital, where he died in the early hours of the following morning. A post-mortem revealed that his skull had been fractured in two places.

The death of PC Snipe caused an outcry. Editorial commentaries in the Birmingham

press railed against the brutality, violence and degradation that confronted the city's magistrates on a daily basis. According to the *Mail*, "A large percentage of the rising generation are emerging from boyhood into manhood without acknowledging any authority whatever, and with all the instincts of the savage brute implanted in them."

The *Mail* was not alone in demanding the introduction of flogging for crimes of violence. As it pointed out, a public meeting in St George's Ward, attended by a large number of working people – many of whom lived locally, close to the scene where PC Snipe had been assaulted – "enthusiastically applauded" calls for brutal street ruffians to be flogged. "Public feeling has reached a white heat," the *Mail* commented, "and very properly so."

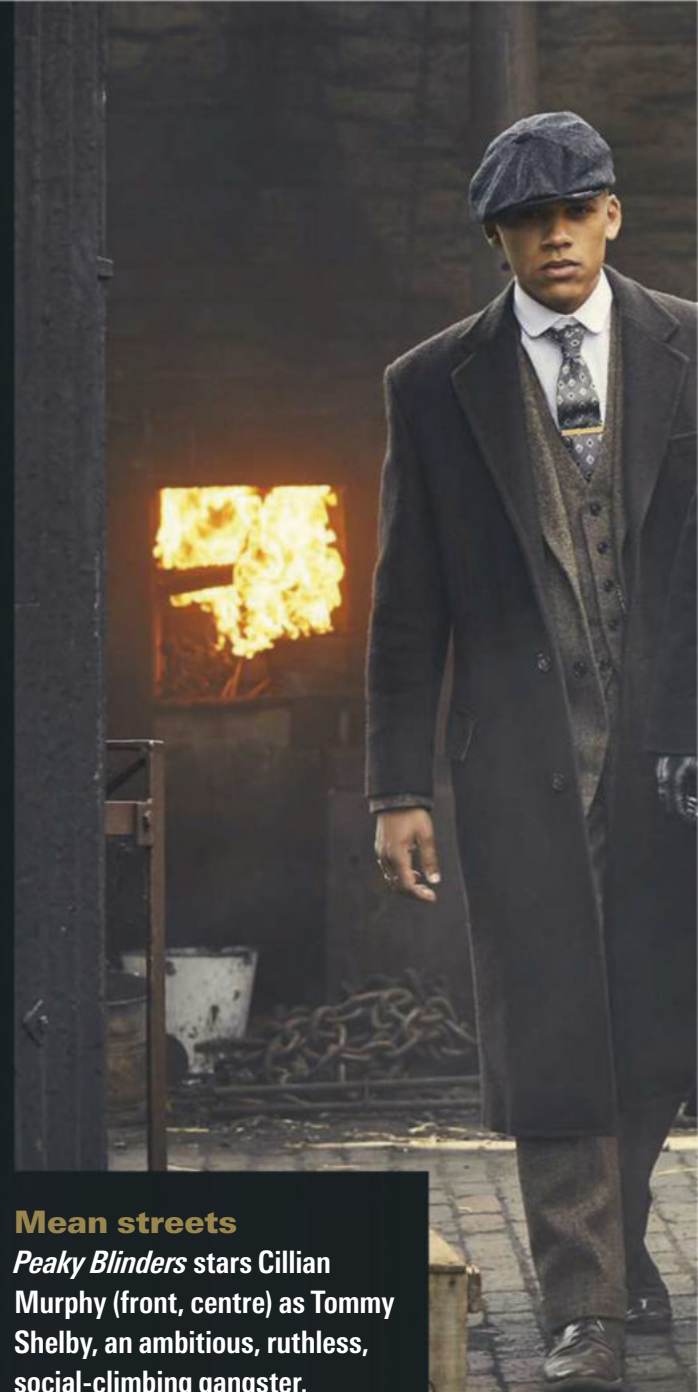
### Mistaken identity

A local woman named Polly Mullins identified the brick-thrower as James Franklin. Aged 19, Franklin worked as a file-cutter. He stood trial at the Birmingham Assizes on 16 December 1897, but the case against him collapsed when defence witnesses testified that the brick had been thrown not by Franklin, but by 19-year-old George 'Cloggy' Williams. Franklin was found not guilty.

Williams went on the run as soon as he heard that PC Snipe had died. He evaded arrest until 9 January 1898. When he made his first appearance before the city's stipendiary magistrate, reporters noted that, "his hair, which is of a light colour, was dressed in the approved 'peaky blinder' style, short at the back, and pulled down in a fringe over his forehead". His former employer testified that Williams had worked as a glass-beveller for four years before leaving abruptly, without drawing his wages, on the day of Snipe's death. Contrary to the prevailing depiction of peaky blinders as workshy, the employer said Williams had been "very industrious".

### Killer on the loose

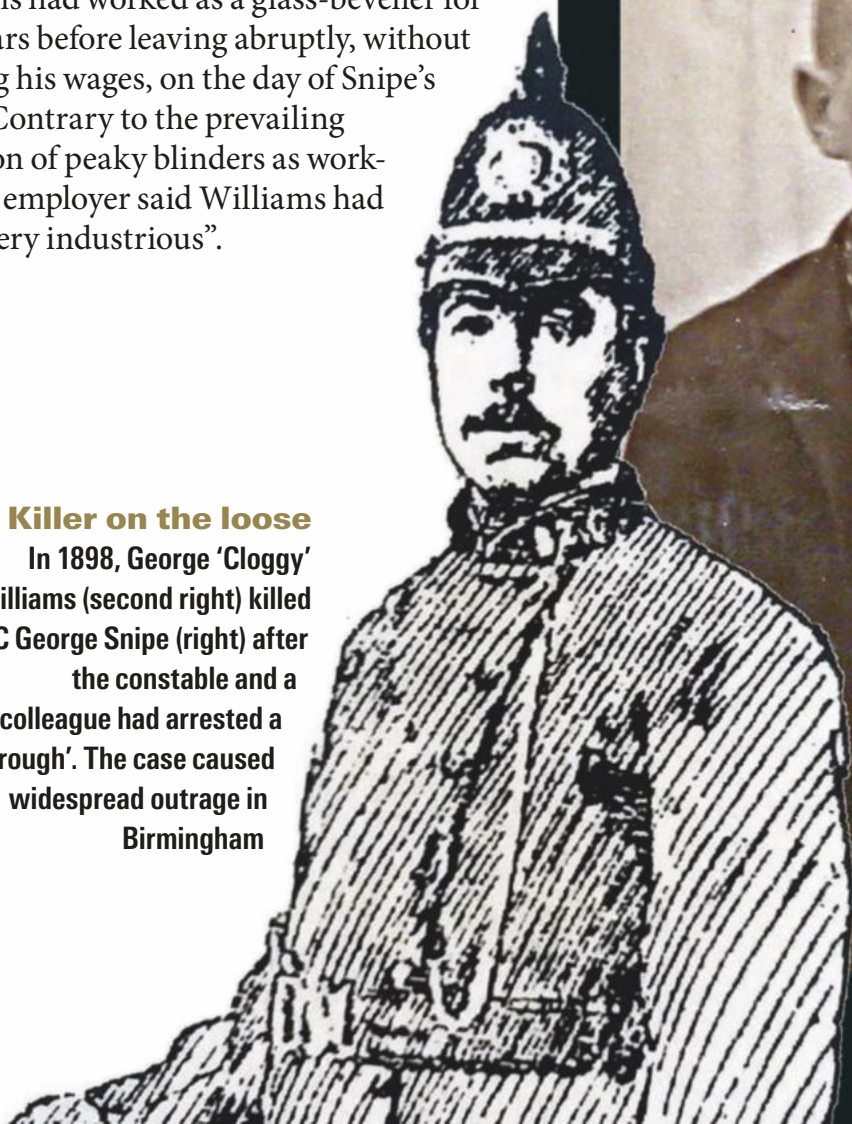
In 1898, George 'Cloggy' Williams (second right) killed PC George Snipe (right) after the constable and a colleague had arrested a 'rough'. The case caused widespread outrage in Birmingham



### Mean streets

*Peaky Blinders* stars Cillian Murphy (front, centre) as Tommy Shelby, an ambitious, ruthless, social-climbing gangster.

Series 5 picks up the story of the Shelby clan in 1929 and finds Tommy serving as an MP







## The recession that followed the boom of the 1870s threw thousands of unemployed and disenfranchised youths onto the streets

Williams in turn stood trial at Birmingham Assizes on 17 March 1898. After just two days of hearings, he was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to penal servitude for life. Passing sentence, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Russell, described the crime as “atrocious”, noting that it was “thinly removed” from murder. The judge evidently thought the jury had been unduly lenient in finding Williams guilty only of manslaughter. The local newspapers applauded the sentence. As the *Birmingham Daily Post* put it: “We hope that every rowdy in Birmingham will take the lesson to heart.”

If the term peaky blinder was new in the 1890s, concern at violence among youths in Birmingham’s industrial districts was not. As historian Barbara Weinberger notes, clashes between rival youth gangs were first reported in the city during the early 1870s, their origins in territorial wars fought between English and Irish street gangs. Hostility towards Birmingham’s Irish-Catholic population had intensified during the previous decade. In June 1867, Park Street in the city’s Irish quarter had been largely demolished during the Murphy riots, provoked by an anti-Catholic tirade by the militant Protestant orator William Murphy. Anti-Irish feeling was subsequently inflamed by reports of ‘Fenian’ activity. During the 1870s, according to Weinberger, anti-Irish sentiment “offered a focus and a target for the frustrations of inner city youths which... became institutionalised in gang warfare”.

### No work, no prospects

Weinberger offers two further explanations for a reported upsurge in street disturbances and gang warfare in Birmingham from around 1873–74. The recession that followed the boom of the early 1870s threw thousands of unemployed and disenfranchised youths onto the streets. At the same time, police clampdowns on drunkenness and street gambling were resented in working-class districts. Young men featured prominently in the disturbances that ensued. Weinberger contrasted the vigour of campaigns to reform



**All to smash** In the late 1860s, inflamed by Protestant orator William Murphy, anti-Catholic rioting broke out in Birmingham – disorder that foreshadowed the gangland feuding that was to follow



## Real-life peaky blinders

“public manners” with the indifference shown by the civic authorities to the “welfare or rights of a section of the community who had no power or votes... and for whose behaviour they had nothing but disdain”.

Youthful members of Birmingham’s street gangs described themselves as ‘sloggers’. According to historian Philip Gooderson, the ethnic hostility that sparked gang conflict in the 1870s was later eclipsed by narrower, territorial loyalties. Most of the feuds reported in the press during the 1880s and 1890s involved gangs from adjacent districts. Conflicts spread across the Birmingham conurbation, extending from the central ‘slums’ to Aston, Perry Barr and Balsall Heath, all of which lay outside the jurisdiction of the Birmingham police in 1890.

Street gangs also confronted each other at music halls. On 23 December 1893, John Metcalfe, aged 20, was fatally stabbed in the neck during a fight between rival gangs from Park Street and Barford Street. The gangs clashed outside ‘the Mucker’, the concert hall in Digbeth, fighting with the buckle ends of their belts as well as knives. Thomas Cherry, a 19-year-old nailmaker, was subsequently convicted of manslaughter. He was sentenced to five years’ penal servitude.

By the 1890s, Birmingham’s sloggers had adopted a distinctive uniform. One of the witnesses at Cherry’s trial, William Bond, sported a “cropped head and bell-bottomed trousers”. It was a style shared by the sloggers’ counterparts in Manchester and London, the scuttler and the hooligan.

### Bootboy style

The Birmingham paint and varnish manufacturer Arthur Matthison saw the city’s warring youths at close quarters when his family moved to Summer Lane, close to the spot where PC Snipe was fatally injured and notorious as a rendezvous of the ‘peakies’. In his memoirs, Matthison painted the peaky blinder as intensely style-conscious: “He took pride in his personal appearance and dressed the part with skill. Bell-bottomed trousers secured by a buckle belt, hob-nailed boots, a jacket of sorts, a gaudy scarf and a billy-cock hat with a long elongated brim. This hat was worn well over one eye, hence the name ‘peaky blinder’. His hair was prison cropped all over his head, except for a quiff in front which was grown long and plastered down obliquely on his forehead.”

As Matthison pointed out, most peakies belonged to a slogging gang. He saw these youths as “the product of poverty, squalor and slum environment”. To Matthison, living in Summer Lane with “slums abounding all around”, it was all too apparent that youth violence was the by-product of harsh social

### Turf wars

A steam tram travels past Smithfield Market in Birmingham in the 1890s. It was a decade when different areas of the city each had gangs that jealously guarded ‘their’ turf



**London boy** It wasn’t just in Birmingham that image-conscious young men turned to gangland life, as this photograph of a hooligan and friends in the capital from c1900 shows

MUSEUM OF LONDON/GETTY IMAGES







### Hard times

Homeless people are 'moved on' by the police in the 19th century. Economic problems left many Britons in abject poverty and may also have fuelled the growth in gangs



and economic conditions. Historian Philip Gooderson qualifies this assessment, pointing out that gang conflicts not only extended beyond the city's slums but also drew in many youths in full-time work. The occupations of the sloggers who appeared in droves before the magistrates, according to Gooderson, read like "a roll-call" of Birmingham's industrial workforce: "brass caster, iron caster, fender maker, striker, hinge maker, filer, stamper, chandelier maker, gun polisher, coach builder, spectacle maker, glass blower". Half of them worked in the iron or the brass industries, the dominant sectors of the local economy. None of them, however, could be described as middle-class. Slogging, like scuttling in Manchester and Salford, was a working-class pastime, reflecting the kudos attached to displays of fighting prowess and toughness in working-class neighbourhoods. Middle-class youths, with greater opportunities and better prospects, had no incentive to risk injury and imprisonment.

The *Mail* dispatched a reporter to Summer Lane, where Matthison lived in the early 1890s, and the correspondent relayed an encounter with a peakie's 'moll'. She too was easily identified by her appearance, since it mirrored those of the peaky blinder himself: "There was the same lavish display of pearl buttons, the well-developed fringe obscuring the whole of the forehead and descending nearly to her eyes, and the characteristic gaudy-coloured silk neckerchief covering her throat. Her head was hidden beneath an elaborate hat of considerable dimensions and decorated with feathers and poppies." (Interestingly, by the late 1890s, the peaky blinder's uniform incorporated the pearl buttons typically associated with the London costermonger.) The reporter concluded, ruefully, that Summer Lane's molls were a "long-suffering lot".

### The glamour fades

In the years before the First World War, Birmingham's peaky blinders faded from view. Gooderson attributes the decline of slogging gangs and the concomitant disappearance of the peakies to a number of factors, ranging from the growth of football as an alternative source of excitement for working-class youths to a belated clampdown by the police and judiciary.

Like all youth fashions, peaky blinder style had a limited shelf-life. In the early decades of the 20th century, young people in Birmingham, as elsewhere across Britain, began to look to Hollywood for a new sense of glamour. Had a youth dressed as a peaky blinder made an appearance in Birmingham in the 1920s he would have been greeted with astonishment, although middle-aged pas-

## Peaky blinder style had a limited shelf-life. In the early 20th century, young people began to look to Hollywood for a new sense of glamour

sers-by might have chuckled in recognition.

In 1936, nearly 40 years after their demise, memories of the peaky blinders were stirred by a series of letters published in the "Notes and Queries" column of the *Birmingham Weekly Post*. One reader had seen "many a policeman" and civilians alike "laid out" by them. In reply, "Bred and Born Brum" insisted that the peaky blinder was "just an ordinary working man... He could always be found at work during the day in some brass foundry, doing his bit at the lathe or vice or perhaps as a polisher or in the casting shop."

Another correspondent, F Atkins, was adamant that "a good many readers have a wrong conception" of peaky blinders: "Their actions were mostly restrained to rival gangs and the police. The general public was seldom interfered with unless they interfered." Mr Atkins also revealed how the hat that gave the peakie his name was fashioned. It was a "Bowler hat with the brim made to fit the sides, the front of the brim came to a point almost like the spout of a jug. This was done by wetting the brim, warming it by the fire, then making it the shape required. This was worn on the side of the head to show the hair on the other side done in a 'quiff'."

The peaky blinders had long ceased to stalk Birmingham's toughest streets. But their fashion sense and penchant for violence had guaranteed their spot in the second city's collective memory. **H**

.....  
**Andrew Davies** is the author of *City of Gangs: Glasgow and the Rise of the British Gangster* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2013). He'll be discussing the real peaky blinders in a forthcoming episode of our podcast: [historyextra.com/podcast](http://historyextra.com/podcast)

**READ** **The Gangs of Birmingham: The True Story of the Peaky Blinders** by Philip Gooderson (Milo Books, 2010)

**WATCH** Series 5 of the BBC One drama **Peaky Blinders** is scheduled to begin in late August





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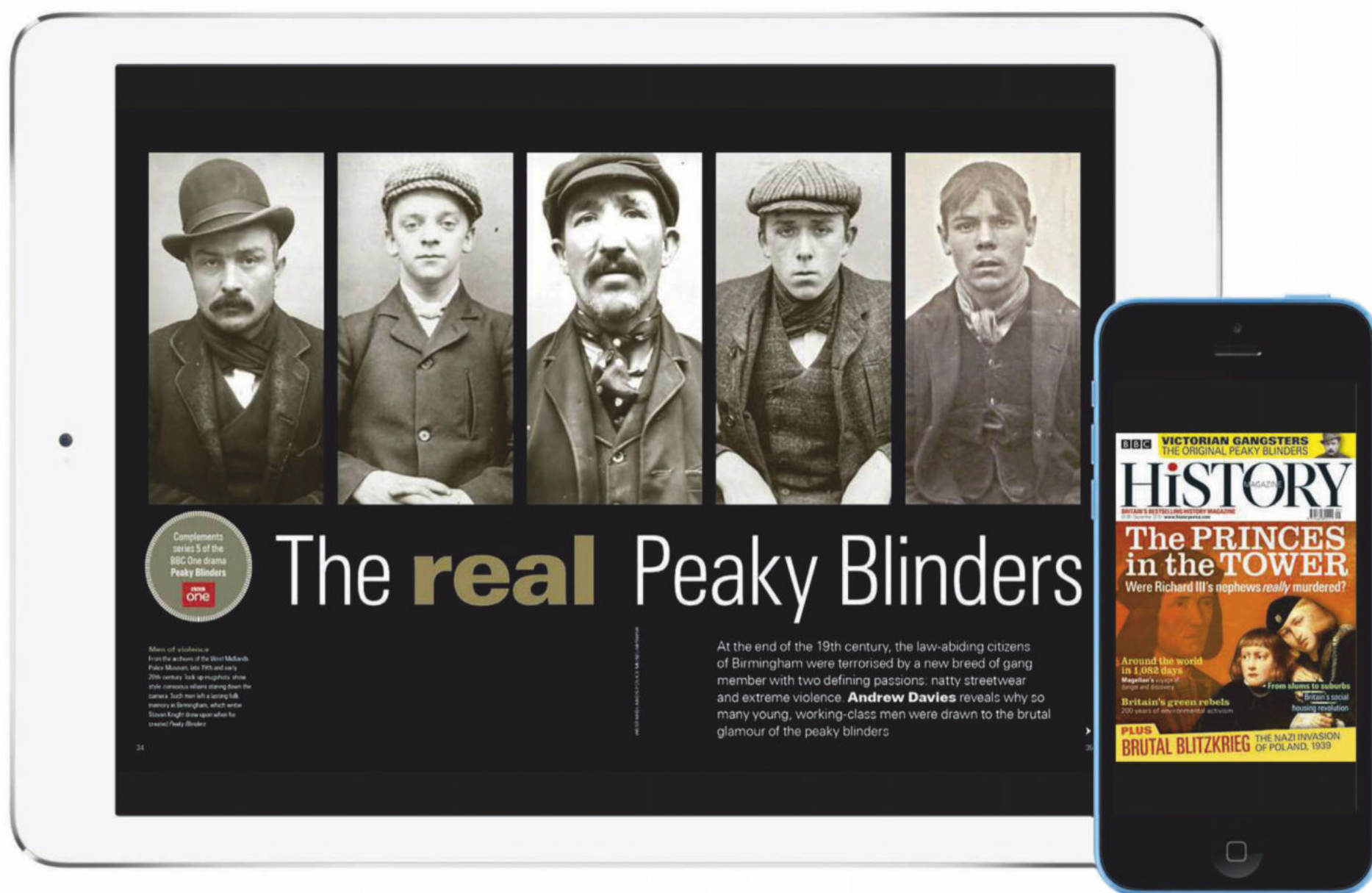


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### Death of innocence

A painting from 1878 shows Edward V and his brother, Richard of Shrewsbury, alone and scared in the Tower of London. What happened to the boys behind the Tower's walls has been the subject of debate for five centuries



## THE BIG DEBATE

# Did Richard III really kill the Princes in the Tower?

For centuries, received opinion has had it that the Yorkist king ordered the murder of his young nephews, Edward and Richard, in a ruthless bid to secure his throne. But might the two princes instead have lived on into the Tudor era?

**Matthew Lewis** and **Nathen Amin** debate the issue



### Matthew Lewis

is a historian and author. His books include *Richard III: Loyalty Binds Me* (Amberley, 2018)



### Nathen Amin

is an author with a special interest in Henry VII. His books include *The House of Beaufort: The Bastard Line that Captured the Crown* (Amberley, 2017)

**I**t's one of the most notorious episodes in all of British history, but one that stubbornly refuses to give up all its secrets. When Edward V and his younger brother, Richard of Shrewsbury, disappeared into the Tower of London in 1483 – where, many believe, they were murdered – the finger of blame for their fate soon alighted on their uncle, Richard III. And there it has stayed for the past 500 years. But proving Richard's guilt has proved fiendishly difficult, and throughout those five centuries a strand of opinion has advanced the case for Richard's innocence.

Here's what we know: in April 1483, Edward IV died suddenly at the age of just 40. Edward's eldest son was proclaimed king (as Edward V). But the young Edward was just 12 years old, and so a lord protector was required to help him through his minority – that role fell to the new king's uncle, Richard.

Edward's coronation was set for 22 June, but soon events had taken a dramatic turn: Edward IV's marriage was declared bigamous, Richard was himself declared king (as Richard III) and then young Edward and his brother vanished into the Tower,

apparently never to be seen in public again.

Richard arguably had the most to gain from eliminating the young princes but he wasn't the only king to be menaced by rival claims to his throne in the late 15th century. After defeating Richard at 1485's battle of Bosworth, Henry VII was confronted by two pretenders to his own crown: Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck, the latter of whom claimed to be Richard of Shrewsbury. Could these rebellions have been inspired by the continued survival of the young princes? In short, did Richard spare them, rather than ordering their deaths? Two leading experts debate this question.

**Matthew Lewis:** When the French philosopher Pierre Bayle declared that "the antiquity and general acceptance of an opinion is not assurance of its truth", he wasn't referring to the princes in the Tower. But his observation applies perfectly to this famous mystery. Many claim to know beyond reasonable doubt what happened – usually that the boys' uncle Richard III had them murdered – but no one truly does. I believe the potential that they lived beyond Richard's death in 1485 has never received the attention it deserves.

The certainty that the princes died in



### HEIRS AND PRETENDERS

Five potential threats to Richard and Henry's crowns

#### Edward V

When Edward IV died in 1483, it was widely expected that his 12-year-old son, also Edward, would accede to the throne. Edward's coronation was set for 22 June but, by the end of the month, his uncle Richard had seized the crown and consigned his nephew to the Tower. Young Edward was apparently never seen in public again – his fate the source of a 500-year mystery.

#### Richard of Shrewsbury

Edward V's younger brother, nine-year-old Richard, was also sent to the Tower when his uncle seized the throne. Richard of Shrewsbury's fate is unknown: most historians argue that Richard III ordered his murder, though others speculate that he could have survived into the reign of Henry VII.

#### Edward, Earl of Warwick

As the nephew of kings Edward IV and Richard III, Edward, Earl of Warwick (born 1475) had a powerful claim to the English throne. Henry VII certainly regarded Edward as a threat and imprisoned him in the Tower. Edward's fate was sealed when he became involved in a plot to flee the Tower with Perkin Warbeck (see below). Henry had Edward executed for treason in 1499.

#### Lambert Simnel

In May 1487, Henry VII's Yorkist enemies had Lambert Simnel (c1477–c1525) crowned 'King Edward VI' in Dublin, claiming that he was Edward, Earl of Warwick. Having landed in England, Simnel's rebel army was defeated at the battle of Stoke Field – but Henry pardoned Simnel, putting him to work in the royal kitchen.

#### Perkin Warbeck

In 1497, Perkin Warbeck (c1474–99) headed an uprising against Henry VII in Cornwall, declaring that he was Richard of Shrewsbury. The rebels headed for Taunton but, on learning of the approach of loyalist forces, Warbeck fled. He was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London. There he remained until a botched escape attempt ended in his execution.

Richard's custody was born on the continent. Contemporary English sources were much less confident of the boys' fate (or fates – for they might have differed). Well into the Tudor era, many writers suggested that at least one of the brothers survived – smuggled from the Tower across the sea or spared by their would-be murderers. It was a common concession that, after murdering Edward V, the killers took pity on his younger brother, Richard. In fact, I suspect that they were never in any danger at all from their uncle Richard, and there are several compelling theories that offer a glimpse of their survival into the Tudor era – when they would have been a far greater threat to the crown than they were in 1483.

Occam's Razor, the principle that the simplest explanation is usually the right one, has often been used to bolster the suggestion that Richard murdered his nephews. Relying on it is a symptom of the lack of evidence to support that conclusion. But it can also be applied to aspects of the story to make their survival seem *more* likely, not less.

When the princes' mother, Elizabeth Woodville, sent her daughters out of sanctuary and into Richard III's care in spring 1484, can she really have believed he had killed his nephews months earlier? Her daughters were a threat to Richard; the eldest, Elizabeth of York, was to marry Henry Tudor if he could win Richard's throne. Yet they all survived. The simplest explanation for all this is that she knew her sons were safe.

Why did Elizabeth of York keep a book that had belonged to her uncle Richard and sign her name beneath his? That is hardly the

**// None of those closest to the princes accused Richard of murder – not even Elizabeth Woodville, the boys' mother //**  
**Matthew Lewis**



action of someone who believed he had murdered her brothers. The behaviour of the main protagonists is among the most compelling evidence that there were no murders.

It is striking that none of those closest to the princes made accusations against Richard III. Elizabeth Woodville lived until 1492, but never once accused Richard of their murder. Their sister, Elizabeth of York, was queen until her death in 1503, and even when she had her own dynasty to protect, she, like her sisters, remained silent on the fate of her brothers.

Some historians insist on relying entirely on Thomas More's account of the fate of the princes. In his *History of King Richard III*, written between c1513 and 1519, More claims that one of Richard's henchmen, James Tyrrell, confessed to the princes' murder. Yet More's version of events is not supported by any evidence whatsoever, and his story of Richard III is riddled with demonstrable errors.

In fact, the best-informed contemporary writer, the Crowland Chronicler, says only that rumours of the princes' deaths emerged as part of a major uprising against Richard III in October 1483, but does not say they were true. For me, therefore, the possibility of the princes' survival into the reign of Henry VII is very real indeed.

**Nathen Amin:** If we want to introduce philosophical quotes, none are simpler than 'where there's smoke, there's fire' – though it's perhaps not as pleasing to the ear as Pierre Bayle's laudable effort. It is not possible to argue conclusively that the princes were murdered, for irrefutable evidence of their fate is frustratingly vague. But the evidence we *do* have strongly suggests they were.





**Sacrificial lambs?**  
Elizabeth Woodville and three of her daughters shown in Canterbury Cathedral. Did Elizabeth entrust her daughters to Richard III knowing he had ordered the murder of her sons?

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Welsh-Lancastrian nonentity like Henry Tudor as a plausible contender for the throne had there been any doubt whatsoever that the princes had been killed.

What of precedent? Well, deposed kings were typically slain, as was the case with Edward II, Richard II and Henry VI. Though young Edward V had not been crowned, he *had* been recognised as king, with fealty to his crown widely sworn.

Even mere pretenders to the throne could prove seriously disruptive if they weren't dealt with promptly. Richard II's failure to execute Henry Bolingbroke (the future Henry IV), and the Yorkist failure to capture Henry Tudor, both proved costly. It made little sense in 1483 not to subdue a threat before it could develop further. This same principle ultimately led Henry VII to order the execution of Edward, Earl of Warwick – who, as Richard III's nephew, had a strong claim to the throne – in 1499.

Sadly, the deaths of the princes were a necessary evil to secure the futures of the sitting dynasties of the day. The lack of evidence regarding the princes' death does not justify the argument that they survived. Quite simply, as 1483 progressed, their presence was a risk that exposed many who stood to gain from their demise. It's implausible that they lived on in such a fragile atmosphere. This is one scenario where Occam's Razor *is* most fitting.

**Matthew Lewis:** Poor Warwick. A fatted calf slaughtered for Tudor security. That was the Tudor way. Yet it wasn't Richard's. Based on the previous 30 years of his life, such an act was way out of character, and cannot have been his first choice.

It's true: Edward IV's children remained a threat to Richard. And there *was* a precedent of killing, or at least claiming to kill, deposed kings. But in all these cases, a body was produced to silence rumours and vanquish danger. Why didn't Richard do the same with the princes? He could have blamed Buckingham, the plague, or a botched plan to free them... it mattered less whether people believed the story than that they knew the boys were dead.

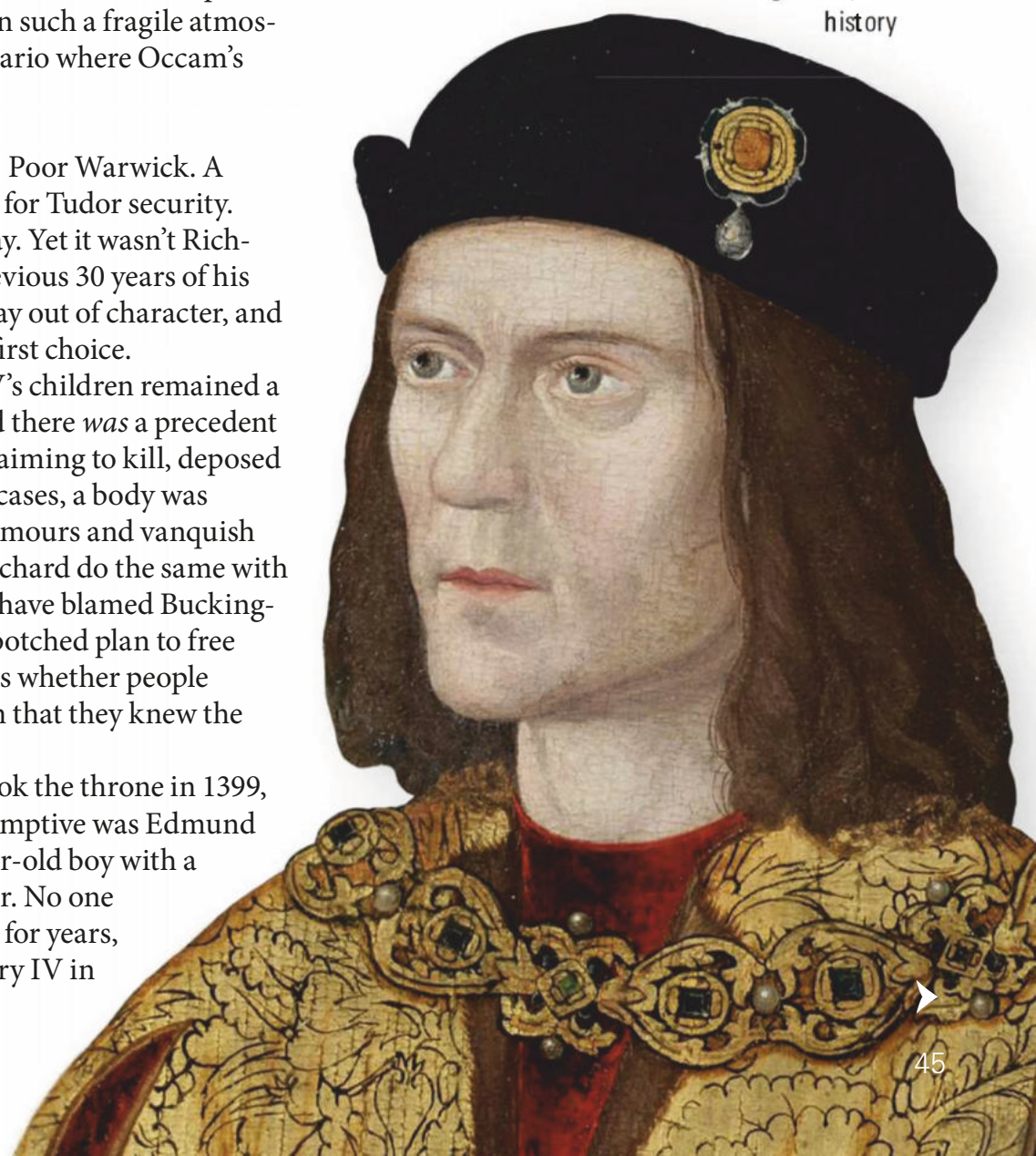
When Henry IV took the throne in 1399, Richard II's heir presumptive was Edmund Mortimer, a seven-year-old boy with a younger brother, Roger. No one knew where they were for years, until the death of Henry IV in 1413, when Henry V

**// Too many people stood to prosper from the princes' death. It is flawed to argue that they posed no threat to Richard //**

**Nathen Amin**

#### Ugly reputation

The princes in the Tower saga has made Richard III (shown in a 16th-century portrait) one of the most controversial kings in English history



Firstly, too many people stood to gain from the princes' demise. Richard III's kingship rested on the assertion that his nephews were illegitimate. It is flawed to say they posed no threat to him, because parliament could have overturned their status as illegitimates. There always remained the possibility that these fallen princes would one day seek to recover their stripped inheritance – why wouldn't they?

If Richard wasn't concerned about his present position, he certainly needed to safeguard the crown he intended to one day pass on to his son, and thereafter grandson. The Wars of the Roses, after all, were a dynastic fallout several generations after the deposition of Richard II. Nobody had foreseen those issues in 1399, but in 1485 the third Richard was acutely aware of the dangers a latent claim could one day pose.

There were others who stood to prosper from the princes' deaths, too. These included the Duke of Buckingham, who briefly soared high under Richard III, and the father-and-son team of John and Thomas Howard, who had previously seen their claim to the dukedom of Norfolk dismissed in favour of the younger of the princes, Richard. Richard's attainder [forfeiture of lands and rights] and disappearance paved the way for the Howards to receive the Norfolk title, which the family still retain today.

All the principal suspects had vast affinities swollen with men who sought to rise with their masters, giving many lesser-known figures around London ample incentive to dispense with the princes to advance their own careers. And Yorkist opponents of Richard III would hardly have put forward a



# // I strongly suspect that the Lambert Simnel rebellion against Henry VII was an uprising in favour of Edward V //

Matthew Lewis



**Lesson from history** Henry Bolingbroke leads Richard II to renounce his throne in 1399. Did Richard II's failure to execute Henry when he had the chance inform Richard III's treatment of the princes in the Tower?

## Rival claimants

A portrait of Henry VII. If the princes did outlive Richard III, they would have presented Henry with a serious dilemma



released them, allowing Edmund to take possession of his inheritance.

Richard had a perfect model for what to do with two boys: not kill them, but hide them. His sister was Duchess of Burgundy, while after more than a decade in the north, Richard had properties he was intimately familiar with, filled with men who were passionately loyal to him. He had places to hide his nephews; in fact, their presence might explain the appointment of another of Richard's nephews, John de la Pole, to run the Council of the North.

Aside from the princes, 17 of Richard's nephews and nieces were alive at the beginning of his reign. Every one was still alive on the day of his death at the battle of Bosworth.

As for Occam's Razor: two missing boys, two pretenders to Henry VII's throne – this surely points in the direction of Henry being responsible for their deaths.

**Nathen Amin:** Warwick indeed was a fatted calf slaughtered for Tudor security – killed to satisfy the single biggest preoccupation of any sitting medieval king, the endurance of their line. Why is it so implausible that Richard III was capable of the same act in 1483? He may have been an exemplary duke hitherto, but upon becoming king the goalposts had moved significantly and his new mission as a good father was to secure his son Edward's future.

Killing the princes may not have been Richard's first choice, and I reject all assertions he was a tyrant or monster. But when you place yourself in his shoes during that tense

summer – uncertain who around him was friend or foe – it is surely credible he acted decisively to the benefit of himself and his line. Unpalatable as it may be to the modern observer, I'd argue Richard had learnt from the hesitancy of his father, Richard, 3rd Duke of York, who ended his life with his head spiked on a gateway after defeat in battle by the Lancastrians.

Edmund Mortimer is an intriguing precedent, but only if we overlook the fact that, unlike Edward V, he was never roundly recognised as king, with oaths sworn across the realm to uphold his kingship. Do not underestimate the strength of loyalty in the heart of a medieval Englishman who had sworn fealty to his king.

So why were the boys' bodies not produced? If Richard presented the corpses of the princes, just 12 and 9 respectively, to the citizens of London, he would surely have opened himself to accusations of murder at home and abroad. Rumours of their demise were already rife, and the sight of their bodies would have confirmed the suspicions of many. With proof, resistance to Richard's rule would have hardened, for while previously deposed kings had lost their crowns through their own transgressions, these boys were truly innocents. Only usurpers killed their predecessors, and this was not an accusation that Richard wished to invite.

As for Henry, he simply followed Richard's policy – to act as though nothing was untoward and hope the matter was gradually forgotten. To propose that the princes outlived Richard and survived into Henry's reign merely raises questions about the





### The lost brother?

Matthew Lewis believes it's a "strong possibility" that Perkin Warbeck – shown in a c1495 portrait – was one of the princes in the Tower

competency of those involved. Richard and Henry were many things – but they weren't incompetent.

**Matthew Lewis:** The Warwick example shows that kings did not tend to murder child hostages: Warwick was kept alive for 14 years before his execution. And the point I'm making about Richard III's failure to produce the bodies is this: murdering the princes and keeping it quiet did nothing to remove any threat.

So what did happen to the princes? There are several survival theories with at least as much circumstantial evidence to support them than the notion they died in 1483. I strongly suspect that the Lambert Simnel rebellion against Henry VII of 1487 was an uprising in favour of Edward V, not Edward, Earl of Warwick. Why would Elizabeth Woodville and her son Thomas Grey be suspected of involvement in a revolt favouring Warwick? They had absolutely nothing to gain from it. Elizabeth of York was already queen and had a son, Prince Arthur. The only thing that placed Elizabeth Woodville in a better position in 1487 than having her daughter on the throne was putting one of her sons on it.

The Tudor court poet Bernard André was adamant that the rising was in the name of a son of Edward IV. A 1526 report on Ireland for Henry VIII asserts the same. Then you have John de la Pole's decision to overlook his own very strong Yorkist claim and declare his support for Lambert Simnel. Take all of these into account and it soon becomes clear that something other than the official Tudor story was almost certainly going on.

Perkin Warbeck, another pretender to Henry VII's throne, was given a similar Tudor spin – an odd name, humble background, documented torture, beatings to the face – to paper over the strong possibility, backed by crowned heads across Europe, that he was the genuine Richard, Duke of York (the youngest of the princes in the Tower).

It requires a feat of cognitive dissonance to assert, with any certainty, that Richard III murdered the princes. Their survival is a real possibility – one that demands recognition and examination.

**Nathen Amin:** I would counter that Warwick's example shows that Henry learnt from Richard that it was vital to keep a princely child alive so that they could be presented if called upon. In fact, when Lambert Simnel arrived on the scene and was put forward as Warwick, Henry simply

brought the real Warwick out of the Tower and paraded him through London, quelling much of the doubt in his subjects' minds and forcing Simnel's backers to seek support in Ireland rather than England. Richard had never been able to do this with his other nephews, and the uncertainty cost him his crown, and his life. Henry, on the other hand, had the benefit of keeping alive a child who had never been recognised or accepted as king, and indeed was not the son of a king.

The problem with accepting the survival story in favour of the 'traditional' one is that it raises doubts in some areas while ignoring vast evidence to the contrary. Bernard André does indeed suggest that Simnel claimed to be Edward V, not Warwick, but this is an author roundly derided by Ricardians and other historians for his lack of credibility. Are we to accept this sole statement as truth while disregarding his other errors?

And there are other reasons to doubt André: it disregards the fact that Simnel's cause was generally advanced by the former household of Warwick's father, George Duke of Clarence. And, granted his life by Henry after his capture, Simnel lived a quiet life under Tudor rule until at least 1525. If he had truly been Edward V, he would surely have been recognised by his sister Elizabeth of York and other courtiers. Is this at all a likely scenario, particularly under the reign of Henry VIII? It rails against logic. If there had been any doubt whatsoever, it would have been sheer madness for Henry VII or VIII to keep Simnel alive.

As for Perkin Warbeck, there are discrepancies in the confession he gave post-capture, but an abundance of sourced evidence corroborates the assertion that he was quite simply an effective, even impressive, impostor. Like Simnel, Warbeck was also granted his life – twice – by Henry. And when Henry did eventually order Warbeck's execution, it was arguably only to secure the downfall of the real Yorkist heir, the true surviving prince in the Tower: Warwick.

Surely the best approach to this saga is to weigh up the material available and come to the most rational conclusion, while conceding that it is unlikely we will ever be able to give a definitive answer to the debate. Just like the Jack the Ripper case, and the disappearance of the crew of the *Mary Celeste*, this is one mystery that will run and run. **H**

### HAVE YOUR SAY

Do you think the princes in the Tower outlived Richard III?

Let us know via Twitter or Facebook

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**// If he had truly been Edward V, Simnel would surely have been recognised by his sister Elizabeth of York //**

**Nathen Amin**



# Q&A

A selection of historical **conundrums** answered by experts

## Did people in previous centuries refer to different decades as the 60s, 70s or 80s, like we do today?

▶▶▶ You find very occasional uses of expressions like “the twenties of this century” (ie 1820s) in mid-Victorian newspapers, and certainly by the late 19th century, people would talk about previous decades in the way we do, albeit not as much. In the 1880s, Mark Twain titled an essay *Three Statements of the Eighties*, but there are relatively few other literary uses.

The usage only emerged in an industrial age more attuned to the calendar than previous generations. In earlier times, people might talk of the ‘year of our Lord’ such-and-such, but they also organised their personal and community chronologies in terms of seasons, feast days and royal reigns.

You also have to ask what we mean when we refer to particular decades. The chances are that the images they conjure up in the mind are mostly cultural. So ‘the twenties’ evokes flappers, silent

films, the Charleston; ‘the sixties’ makes us think of the Beatles, hippies and Twiggy; while ‘the eighties’ conjures images of big hair, shoulder-pads and yuppies... and so on.

You might be referring to politics, technological or economic trends, or to wars, but the images these shorthand decade references evoke in most people’s minds are of entertainment, fashion and nostalgia. It’s the product of a pervasive visual culture that did not exist before the 20th century. The cultural identities of decades in previous centuries were not nearly so distinctive.

.....  
Eugene Byrne, author and journalist specialising in history



TOP: Servers at a 15th-century French banquet embrace the fashion for long pointed toes, also seen in the medieval leather shoe beneath

## Is it true that pointy shoes were banned by the medieval royals?

▶▶▶ One of the effects of the Black Death was the contention it caused within the class system of 14th-century England. The working classes not only began to challenge the existing structure by demanding higher wages and better treatment. They also became more socially mobile, testing the social fabric by disputing their own value and beginning to dress above their station.

This problem caused so much unrest that the merchant classes furiously complained and a sumptuary law was put in place by Edward III. This law dictated dress codes dependent on social status, and essentially regulated movement out of one’s social rank. Like the colour of cloth, fur or head wear, shoes were a key indication of one’s social status. The noble classes were permitted two additional foot lengths to their shoe, merchants one foot and peasants a meagre half. These laws weren’t always enforced, however, and excessively long shoes went out of fashion in the reign of Henry IV, who thought they were ridiculous.

.....  
Helen Carr, medieval historian and host of the *Hidden Histories* podcast

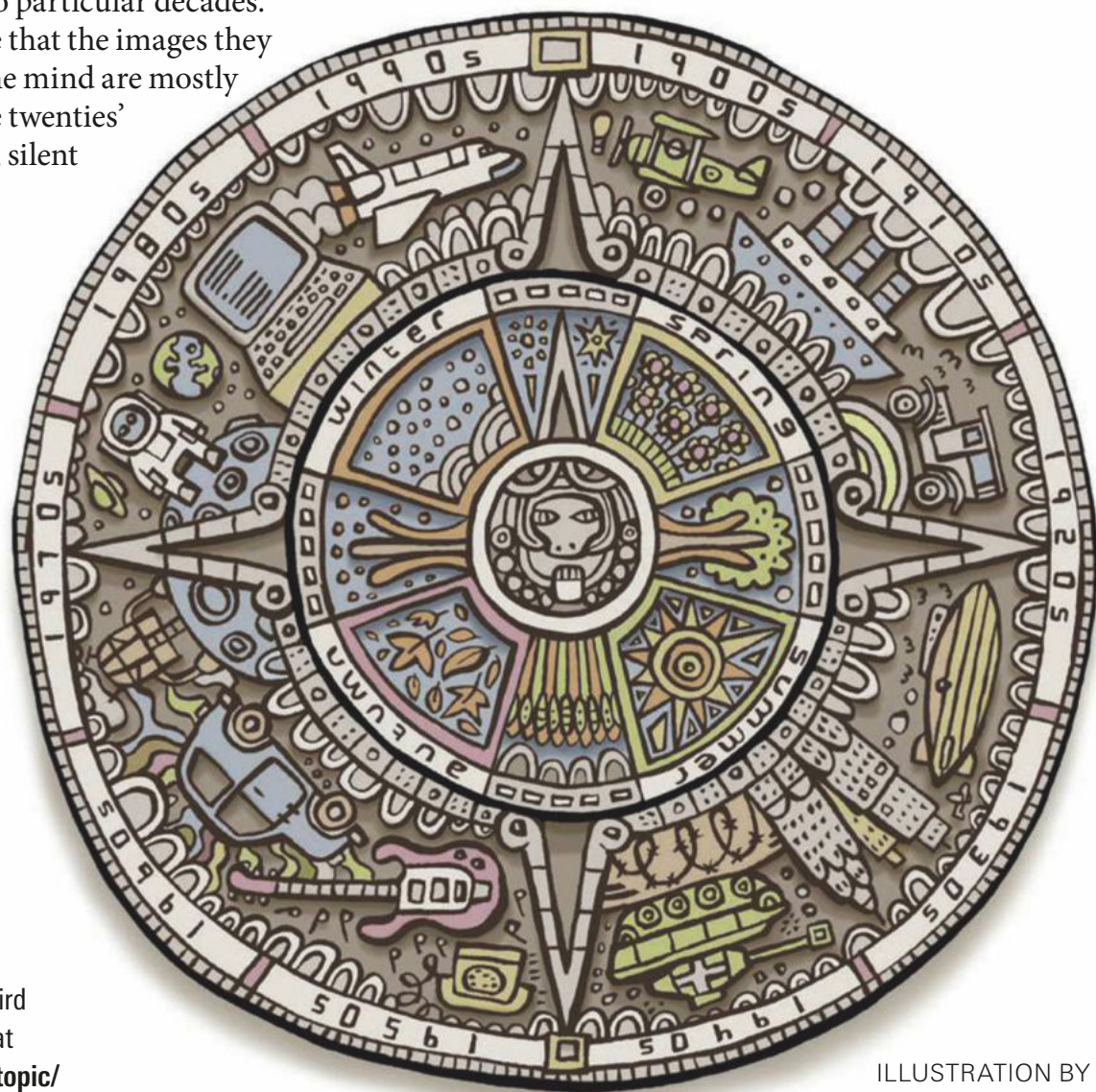


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GLEN MCBETH

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The first recorded use of 'castle' in English could refer to Richard's Castle, the ruins of which now stand on the Shropshire-Herefordshire border

## What is the oldest castle in (what is now) Britain?

▶▶▶ As always with such questions, the answer depends on the definition of terms – in this case, what exactly do we mean by 'castle'?

There are plenty of so-called castles in Britain that can claim to be of very great antiquity. Maiden Castle in Dorset is an Iron Age hill fort built around 600 BC, while Burgh Castle in Norfolk is a Roman shore fort built in the third century AD. But most historians would argue that a castle was a specific type of fortification that differed from these earlier varieties by virtue of being smaller, taller and more private. Such fortifications originated on the continent around the turn of the first millennium and were introduced to England – and, eventually, the rest of Britain – as a result of the Norman conquest.

A handful, however, had been

introduced a generation before 1066, by the French followers of Edward the Confessor. "The foreigners built a castle in Herefordshire," says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1051, providing the first recorded instance of the word 'castle' in English. It could have been the one at Richard's Castle, or the one at Ewyas Harold, both of which are in Herefordshire and have 11th-century earthworks. The following year, the chronicle mentions 'Robert's Castle', which has been identified as Clavering Castle in Essex. Since we cannot say which of these three was built first, any of them might lay claim to the title of 'oldest castle in Britain'.

.....  
**Marc Morris**, author of *Castle: A History of the Buildings that Shaped Medieval Britain* (Windmill Books, 2012)

## DID YOU KNOW...?

### My heart will go on

When Scottish noblewoman Dervorguilla of Galloway's husband, John Balliol, died in 1268 she was so grief-stricken that **she had his heart preserved in an ivory casket which she carried around with her**. At mealtimes, she had the food served as though her late husband was at the table, then distributed his serving to the poor. In 1273, she founded Sweetheart Abbey in his memory and was buried there in 1290, his heart between her breasts.

### Prior grievance

The 13th-century prior of Durham, Thomas de Melsonby, made what became a career-limiting move when he encouraged an acrobat to try to walk across a **tightrope stretched between the west towers of Durham Cathedral**. The acrobat, traditionally known as Hob of Pelaw, lost his footing and fell to his death. In June 1237 Melsonby was elected as bishop of Durham, but King Henry III had other ideas and used the acrobat debacle as evidence of Melsonby's unsuitability for the role.



### Lemur attack

The 1930–31 British Arctic Air Route Expedition received an unexpected setback on the morning of its departure. Its members were enjoying a farewell lunch on the yacht of their sponsor, Stephen Courtauld, when Courtauld's pet lemur Mah-Jongg (pictured above) took a dislike to Percy Lemon, the expedition's radio operator, and **bit him so hard that he severed an artery**. Lemon turned out to be allergic to the iodine that was used to treat the wound and took three months to recover. **H**

.....  
**Julian Humphrys**, writer and journalist specialising in history



**Jerry Brotton** salutes an epic feat of human endurance that helped usher in the modern age

Victory in Malacca had given the Portuguese a commanding position in the south-east Asian spice trade. Now Magellan came up with a bold plan to monopolise control of the region further still. European merchants and adventurers had traditionally journeyed to south-east Asia by travelling east, via a route that took them round the Cape of Good Hope on Africa's southern tip. Yet, after

Magellan travelled to Seville with maps and globes to pitch this solution to Charles. He argued that “it was not yet clearly ascertained whether Malacca was within the boundaries of the Portuguese or the Castilians, because hitherto its longitude had not been definitely known”. He also claimed he “was absolutely certain that the islands called the Moluccas, in which all sorts of spices grow, and from which they were brought to Malacca, were contained in the western, or Castilian division, and that it would be

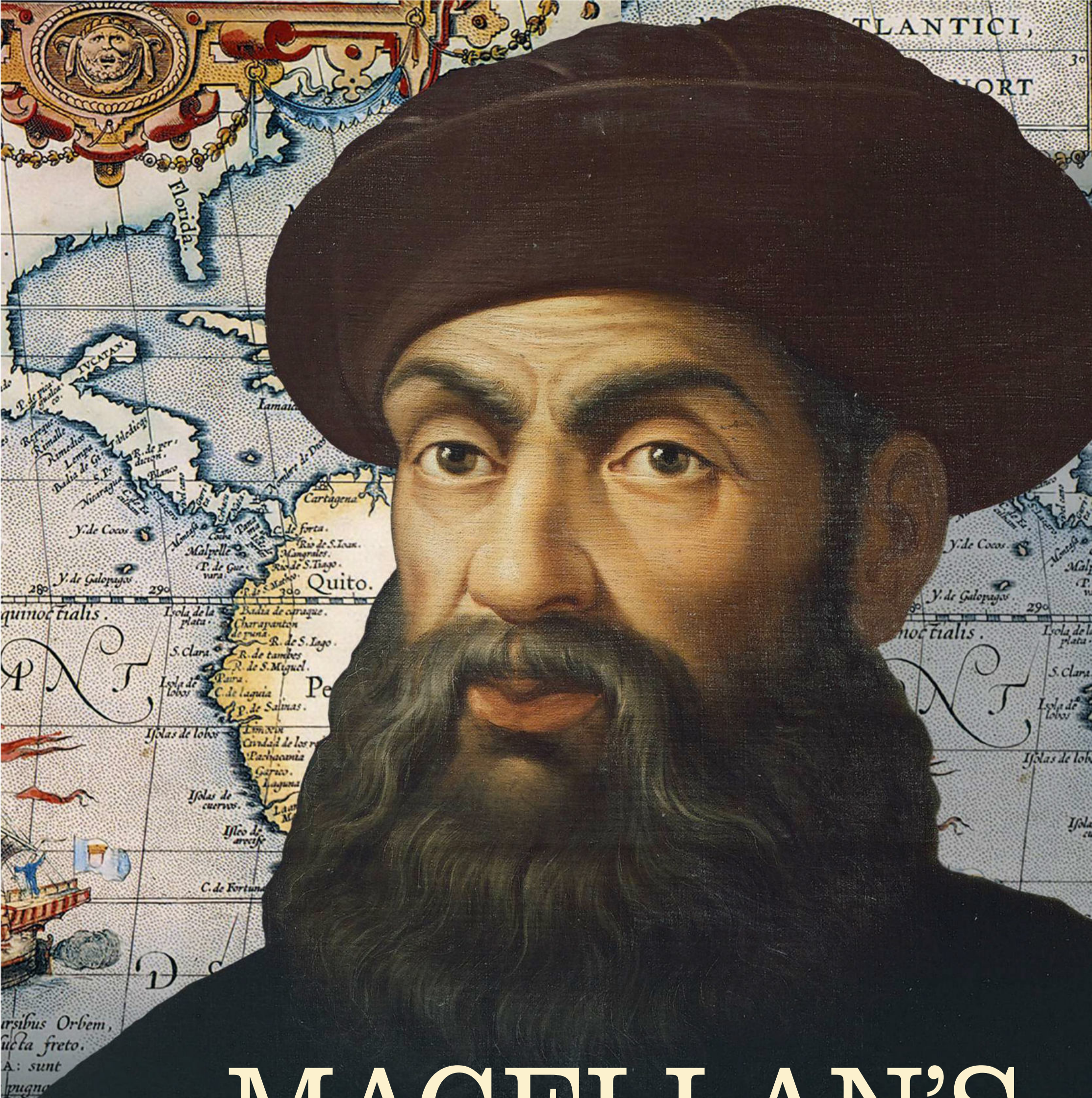
**Magellan believed he could reach the east much quicker by sailing west, round South America and across the Pacific**



## Sailing into history

A portrait of Ferdinand Magellan. The 16th-century map in the background shows one of Magellan's ships, the *Victoria*, sailing across the Pacific during the great circumnavigation

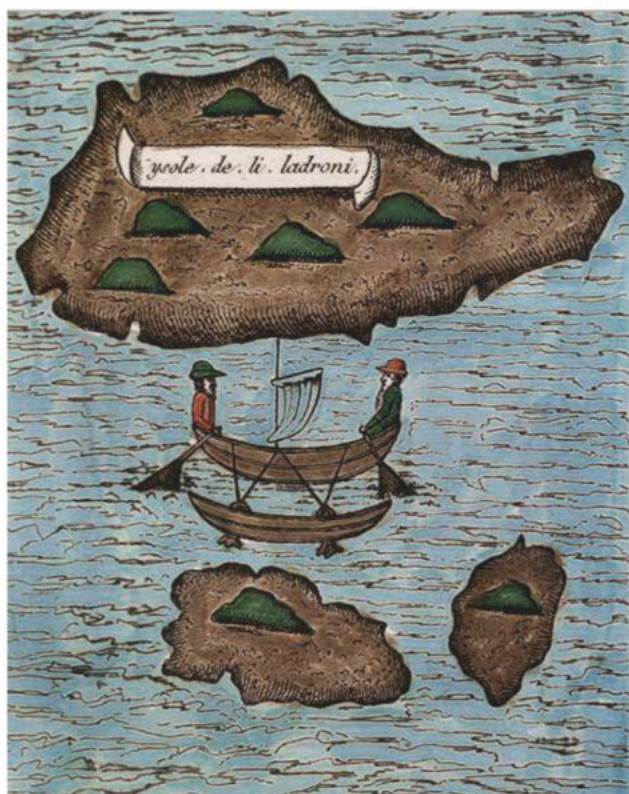




# MAGELLAN'S VOYAGE FROM HELL



## The first voyage around the world



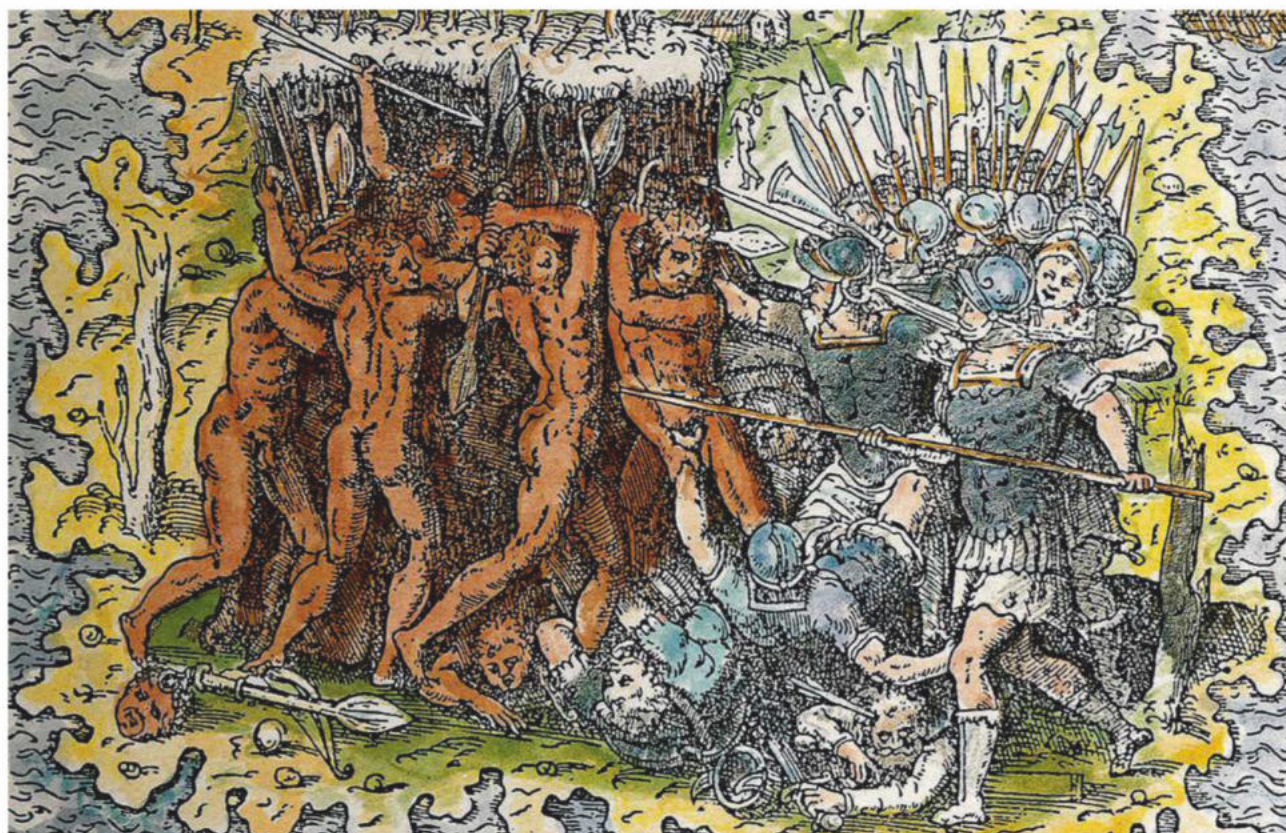
**Land ahoy** The 'Islands of Thieves' (now the Mariana Islands), as depicted by the fleet's Venetian chronicler, Antonio Pigafetta

possible to sail to them and to bring the spices at less trouble and expense from their native soil to Castile". If he could indeed prove that the Moluccas fell within the Spanish half of the globe, it would have a significant impact on European and global geopolitics.

Charles accepted the proposal, and a truly European consortium of Portuguese, Spanish and Germans began their preparations. Magellan proposed to sail round Cape Horn, across to the Moluccas, load a cargo of spices and return the way he came, claiming the islands for Spain. But like many ambitious pan-European projects, rivalries and conflicts quickly emerged. The Spanish nobles were suspicious of approving an expedition under a Portuguese commander, and squabbles broke out over the exact route and the supplies required. Portuguese spies tried to derail the expedition, and by the time the fleet of four carracks (large merchant ships) and one faster, smaller caravel – with a crew of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, Greek, French and even English sailors – finally departed in September 1519 tensions were already high.

### A land of giants

While the first stage of Magellan's route was tried and tested in terms of navigation, it was plagued by political doubledealing. The fleet sailed first to the Canary Islands, outrunning Portuguese vessels sent to arrest the renegade commander. It then sailed on to the Cape Verde Islands before crossing the Atlantic and travelling down the South American coast, reaching modern-day Rio de Janeiro Bay in December 1519. Next it coasted down the Patagonian coast where the fleet's Venetian chronicler, Antonio Pigafetta, described the local inhabitants as giants, a myth that would endure for decades.



**Unwanted guests** Local warriors rush Magellan and his crew "with lances of iron and of bamboo and with these javelins" on the island of Mactan in what is now the Philippines. Magellan's body was never found

It was now that conditions began to deteriorate. As Magellan sailed into unknown southerly waters, the weather worsened, rations were cut, and in April 1520 an almost inevitable mutiny broke out among the crew. Magellan survived. But after a murderous fight, the gruesome execution of two of the conspirators, and others left marooned on the coast to die, his authority was seriously weakened. The odds of finding the hazardous route into the Pacific now appeared low indeed.

The mood blackened further still when one of the ships was wrecked in worsening weather, and the fleet's search for Magellan's promised strait to the Pacific extended to weeks, then months. Finally, in October 1520, Magellan picked up a strong current with high tides taking him west. Passing through what is still known as 'Magellan's Strait', he named the surrounding area Tierra del Fuego, or 'Land of Fire', seeing what he believed were fires from human settlements.

But Magellan's problems were far from over. The challenge of navigating for over a month through unknown waters led to another rebellion and the loss of a further ship, which slipped away back to Spain. Finally, however, on 28 November 1520, Magellan's three remaining vessels entered an ocean he

named 'Mare Pacificum', or 'peaceful sea'.

That sea would provide a larger obstacle to Magellan's ambitions of reaching south-east Asia's spice islands than he could ever have imagined – thanks to an error committed by a Greek geographer 14 centuries earlier. Back in the second century AD, Ptolemy had underestimated the Earth's circumference by over 15 per cent, while also *overestimating* the breadth of south-east Asia. When Renaissance mapmakers projected Ptolemy's estimates onto their maps and globes, they also had to take into account the more recent discoveries in the Americas. This left little space for the still undiscovered Pacific Ocean. Magellan had consulted a terrestrial globe that showed the space between Portugal and China sailing westwards was 130 degrees, when the actual distance was 230 degrees. He had no idea he was entering an ocean that covered nearly half of the Earth's total water surface and a third of the total surface area of the entire globe.

And so the next three months were spent crossing the Pacific in search of land. Conditions were horrific, and scurvy began to ravage the crew. Pigafetta recounted that they "ate biscuit, which was no longer biscuit, but powder of biscuits swarming with worms, for they had eaten the good. It stank strongly of the urine of rats. We drank yellow water that had been putrid for many days. We also ate some ox hides that covered the top of the mainyard."

It is hard to imagine the deprivations of the crossing and the desperation that must have filled the crew, as well as Magellan, as they somehow managed to avoid the ocean's thousands of islands. When the fleet did finally make landfall – after sighting land on 6 March 1521 – it was in Guam in Micronesia. Here, we're told, the locals travelled out to

**They "ate biscuit, which was no longer biscuit, but powder of biscuits swarming with worms. It stank of the urine of rats"**





### New world order

Hans Holbein the Younger's 1533 painting *The Ambassadors* shows two French diplomats in London: Jean de Dinteville, Seigneur of Polisy (left) and Georges de Selve, bishop of Lavaur. The numerous scientific objects in the image reflect the emerging consciousness of global exploration inspired by Magellan's voyage: two globes (one terrestrial and one celestial), a sundial, a quadrant (an angle or time measuring instrument) and a torquetum, which was used to measure astronomical coordinates

meet and trade with the travellers, but according to Pigafetta they then "entered the ships and stole whatever they could lay their hands on". As a result, he named the islands the 'Ladrones', or 'Islands of Thieves'.

If Magellan's relations with the locals were strained in Guam, by the time his fleet reached the Philippine archipelago they had turned murderous – with terrible consequences.

In April 1521 – having already attempted to convert local communities to Christianity – Magellan sailed to the island of Mactan with the aim of subduing and converting its inhabitants too. It was a fatal overreach. The people of Mactan were violently resistant to his overtures and so, while wading ashore, Magellan and his sailors were confronted with hundreds of local warriors, who "rushed upon him with lances of iron and of bamboo and with these javelins, so that they slew our mirror, our light, our comfort, and our true guide". Magellan was killed – his body never to be recovered – his dream of returning to Spain at the head of a fleet laden with spices dead in the water. But the voyage he had

planned and led would have to continue.

The surviving crew nominated Spanish captain Juan Sebastián Elcano as their new commander. A third ship was abandoned as being unseaworthy and the two remaining vessels sailed on to their ultimate destination of Tidore in the Moluccas, which they reached in November 1521. The local chieftain had no love for the marauding Portuguese and agreed to allow the Spanish Elcano to load both ships with spices.

### Survivors limp home

Two years into the odyssey, Elcano now decided to head home. But how would the remnants of his battered fleet get there? Elcano's solution was to send the two ships in opposite directions. One headed back across the Pacific but was captured by Portuguese ships still on the lookout for Magellan. As for Elcano, he took the fateful decision to sail back to Spain across the Indian Ocean and via the Cape of Good Hope. Playing hit and run with the patrolling

Portuguese, his one surviving ship, with just 18 crew (of the fleet's original 270), arrived back in Sanlúcar on 6 September 1522.

The first known circumnavigation of the globe was complete, but at a terrible personal cost. More than 200 of the crew had died – many in awful circumstances. And while you might expect Magellan's epic feat to have been celebrated by a grateful Spanish nation, anti-Portuguese sentiment and the inability of the dead to defend their achievements meant that his family was denied the rewards and preferment they'd been promised.

What's more, in enabling Charles to claim the Moluccas for Spain, Magellan's voyage exacerbated political and commercial tensions in Europe and the Indian Ocean. For the next seven years, Spain and Portugal were locked in a diplomatic war over how to divide the globe between them.

That war was partially waged in the studios of a new breed of mapmakers who – inspired by Magellan's voyage – were creating terrestrial globes to reflect the emerging global consciousness.

### MORE FROM US

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## 1 The fleet sets sail

20 September 1519

## 2 A supply crisis

26 September 1519

### 3 Tensions rise

December 1519

## 10 The odyssey ends

## 9 Elcano heads home

December 1521

## 8 A new commander

BRIDGEMAN/AKG IMAGES



A 1726 engraving shows the *Victoria* limping into Seville in September 1522, almost three years since it had departed Spain



## Magellan's dream of establishing a rapid trade route to the spice islands was still unrealised

In 1529, the Treaty of Saragossa agreed to cede the Moluccas to Spain only after Charles paid a team of “cunning cosmographers” to manipulate the islands’ position so that they lay in the Spanish half of the globe, on a series of what one observer called “maliciously contrived” maps. (As it turned out, Charles relinquished his claim, after concluding that establishing a commercial route between Spain and the Moluccas would be too costly.)

In the short term, then, Magellan’s circumnavigation achieved little. He had discovered nothing new; diplomatic tensions between Spain and Portugal remained high; his dream of establishing a rapid trade route to the spice islands was still unrealised. Why, then, five centuries later, should we remember – even celebrate – his great odyssey?

The answer lies not in the immediate aftermath of the voyage but in the flourishing of the world’s trade routes in the second half of the 16th century, as the links Magellan had helped establish between Europe and south-east Asia allowed the movement of people and goods via South America into the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

By the 1560s the Spanish had named a new region, the Philippines, after Charles’s successor, Philip II, leaving a Spanish-speaking legacy in the region. The 1560s also saw the establishment of the so-called Manila Galleon, Spanish fleets trading between Manila and Mexico, exchanging Chinese silks and porcelain for Mexican silver – and, as a result, enriching much of Europe.

In short, Magellan’s bloodmindedness, his imagination and his determination to use terrestrial globes, rather than flat maps, to understand the world opened up a profusion of new commercial opportunities. You could say that his great voyage fired the starting gun on the race to globalisation, with all the risks and opportunities that this presents us today. **H**

**Jerry Brotton** is professor of Renaissance studies at Queen Mary University of London. His books include *A History of the World in Twelve Maps* (Penguin, 2013)

### LISTEN AGAIN

You can listen to Bridget Kendall and guests discuss whether Magellan really was the first man around the globe on the BBC World Service programme **The Forum**  
[bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csvsfr](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csvsfr)



### 4 Mutineers strike October 1520

After a gruelling journey south, putting down a mutiny and wrecking a ship, Magellan discovers ‘Magellan’s Strait’, a route through the southern tip of South America to the Pacific. Navigating his way takes over a month through unknown waters in terrible conditions with the loss of another ship.

### 5 Into the Pacific November 1520

Magellan finally emerges into open sea. He names it ‘Mare Pacificum’, or ‘peaceful sea’. He is the first European to sail across the Pacific, though having underestimated its size by almost half, the next leg of the voyage is anything but peaceful. Many of the crew die from scurvy.

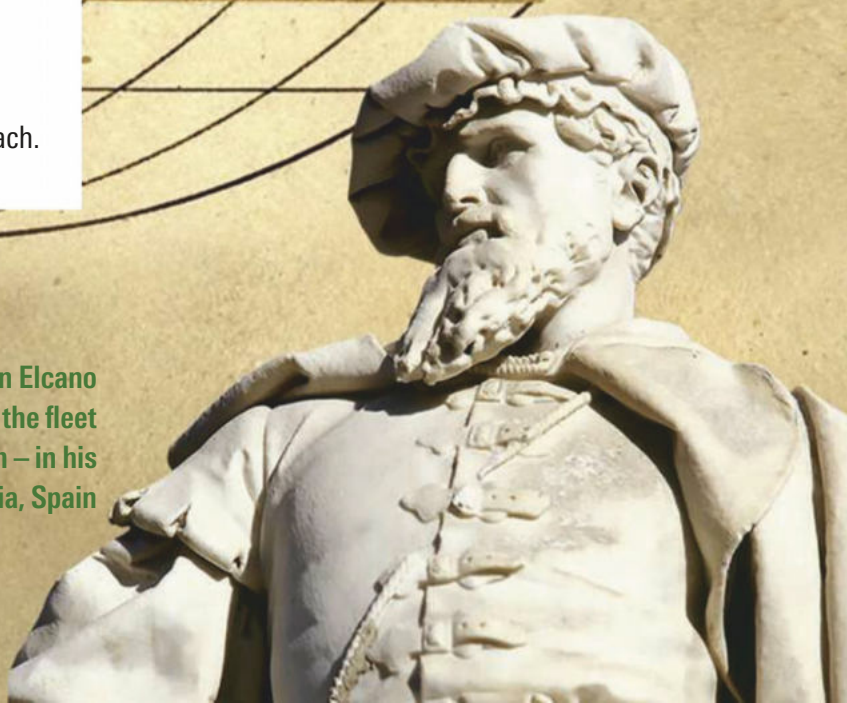
### 6 Land at last March 1521

After more than three months sailing out of sight of land, the ravaged crew land in Guam, Micronesia. Attempting to trade with locals, Magellan and his crew accuse them of theft, naming the islands ‘Ladrones’: the ‘Islands of Thieves’.

### 7 Magellan is slain 27 April 1521

Magellan becomes embroiled in conflicts between rival chieftains and attempts to assert his authority by attacking the ruler of Mactan in the Philippine archipelago. Magellan and many of the crew are killed on the beach. His body is never recovered.

A statue of Juan Sebastián Elcano – who took command of the fleet after Magellan’s death – in his hometown of Getaria, Spain





**“Cold perspiration broke over me. I was fixed to the spot in a trance of horror and despair”**

From the mental anguish of survivors of the Napoleonic Wars to Vietnam veterans' 'PTSD blues', **Emma Butcher** and **Hannah Partis-Jennings** explore humanity's evolving attitudes to war trauma





**Nightmare scenario**

Soldiers of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade pictured during the battle of Dak To, one of the bloodiest engagements of the Vietnam War, November 1967. One in four US veterans of the conflict required psychological assistance







### Unhappy homecoming

A James Gillray caricature from 1793, showing a family cowering in horror as John Bull makes a “glorious return” from war, hints at Britons’ growing recognition of the impact of conflict on veterans

Writers have recorded the traumatic effects of war for thousands of years. Nearly three millennia ago, in Homer’s *Iliad*, Achilles describes how the death in battle of his friend Patroclus caused him to have nightmares, and to isolate himself. Around 1200 BC, in Mesopotamia, soldiers wrote of being visited by the “ghosts they faced in battle”. In his account of the battle of Marathon (490 BC), the historian Herodotus recorded that, in the midst of fighting, the warrior Epizelus “suddenly lost sight in both eyes, though nothing had touched him”.

Fast-forward to Tudor England, and allusions to war trauma appear in the works of Shakespeare. In *Henry IV, Part I*, Lady Percy frets at her husband Hotspur’s sorrowful state after he returns from war:

*“Tell me, sweet lord, what is’t that takes from thee / Thy stomach, pleasure and golden sleep? / Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth / And start so often when thou sit’st alone? / Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks / And given me treasures and me rights of thee / To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy?”*

As the writings of Shakespeare, Herodotus and Homer attest, soldiers and civilians alike have been aware of the psychological impact of war for centuries. But, as the following examples prove, it would be a long time before this recognition was reflected in medical diagnosis or treatment.

## REVOLUTIONARY AND NAPOLEONIC WARS

### The trauma with no name

Shakespeare’s histories may have alluded to war trauma but it would be another two centuries before the British public would experience vicariously the horrors of combat – courtesy of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and the birth of the military memoir.

More than 200 British veterans of the conflicts published their tales of life on the front line, and these autobiographies increasingly addressed the emotional impact of war. In one, Captain Howard chronicles his hallucinations in the catacombs of Paris, when touring the capital after 1814’s battle of Toulouse: *“Cold perspiration broke over my whole body; I stood fixed to the spot in a trance of horror and despair... the skulls with their eyeless sockets, seemed to scowl upon me – my head became dizzy... my brain reeled, and I fell against a crashing pile of mortality, where I swooned away.”*

Despite many soldiers reporting disturbed post-battle mental states, there was still no medical recognition of war trauma. Instead, the condition was given a number of vague labels. One was *le vent du boulet*, translated as ‘wind of a cannonball’. Another was ‘nostalgia’, derived from the Greek

words *nóstos*, meaning ‘homecoming’, and *álgos*, meaning ‘pain’ or ‘ache’. Medical records described soldiers with nostalgia to be gripped with fantasies about returning to their homeland.

These terms sparked a wider interest in bodily and mental suffering, which was communicated through the arts. Romantic poets like Wordsworth wrote of the returning soldier who had a “strange half-absence”. In his caricature *John Bull’s Progress* (shown above), James Gillray depicts a veteran returning home to his family, who cower in horror as he walks through the door. Although war trauma still had no name, it rippled through Britain’s cultural landscape.

**Soldiers with ‘nostalgia’ were said to be gripped with fantasies about returning to their homeland**



## AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

# Undying pain for a broken infantryman

The American Civil War is often remembered through song. Its stirring anthems aimed to unify through patriotism, but many songs linger on the traumatic undercurrent of war. One such was Walter Kittredge's 'Tenting on the Old Camp Ground':

*"Many are the hearts that are weary tonight,  
Wishing for the war to cease;  
Many are the hearts that are looking for  
the right  
To see the dawn of peace."*

Yet despite war's traumatic cultural resonance, medical practitioners in late 19th-century America still struggled to distinguish between mental and physical illness. Da Costa's Syndrome, named after the American Civil War physician Jacob Da Costa, was known informally as 'soldier's heart'. It was thought that post-battle mental states were brought on by a weak heart or overexertion.

Like the Napoleonic Wars half a century earlier, we can draw a picture of soldiers' mental states from the letters and diaries they left behind. The Union soldier Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: "Eaten nothing – suffered the most intense anxiety and everything else possible --...[Y]ou cannot conceive of the wear and tear."

One of the most tragic stories of the war lies with the men of the 16th Connecticut Infantry regiment fighting for the Union. Barely trained, they took part in some of the bloodiest battles of the war, with most ending up in a Confederate prison camp. Some died in what were inhuman conditions, while those who did survive to be reunited with their families were described as "broken". One of them, Wallace Woodford, continued to cry out in his sleep after his return: he died just a few weeks later, at the age of 22. His headstone reads: "Eight months a sufferer in Rebel prison; He came home to die."

Although still undefined, it is clear that war trauma haunted the lives of many of the men who fought in the American Civil War, and that its effects were becoming widely recognised as the dawn of modern war approached.



**Shattered mind** A shell shock sufferer staggers from the front. Some 80,000 cases were recorded in the First World War, yet war trauma continued to be equated with a lack of stoicism

## FIRST WORLD WAR

# How shell shock led to "dottyville"

It was the British psychologist Charles Myers who first coined the term 'shell shock', in 1915, at the height of the First World War.

Hysteria had previously been understood as a female malady; now shell shock was framed as a 'male hysteria', implying a lack of masculine stoicism. Given that soldiers were expected to adhere to masculine ideals of bravery and resilience, shell shock – of which 80,000 cases were recorded in the First World War – was not always treated with sympathy. For example, while he was working at London's National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, Dr Lewis Yealland applied electric shocks to men with mutism until they started to speak again.

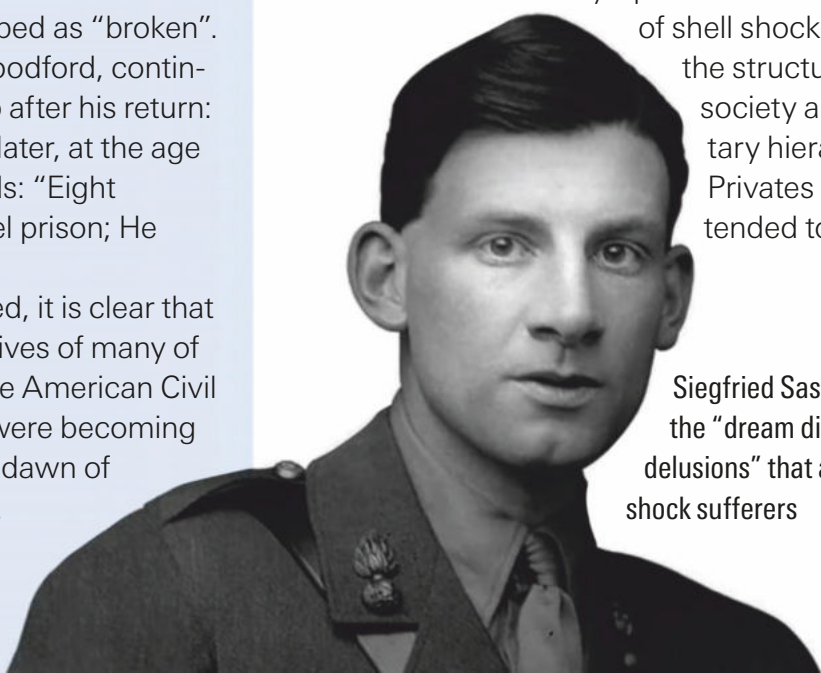
There was a class dynamic in the symptoms and the treatment of shell shock, mirroring the structure of prewar society and its military hierarchies. Privates allegedly tended to exhibit

more psychosomatic symptoms than officers, for example mutism or bodily contortions. Mutism may have been linked to the psychological pressures of constantly following orders without being able to speak your mind or articulate fears.

Some shell shock sufferers were treated humanely at institutions like the famous Craiglockhart in Scotland. Among them was the soldier-poet Siegfried Sassoon, who referred to Craiglockhart as "dottyville", and spoke fondly of the place and his close relationship with his therapist WHR Rivers. However, Sassoon also wrote about the horror of shell shock: "By night each man was back in his doomed sector of horrorstricken front line, where the panic and stampede of some ghastly experience was re-enacted among the livid faces of the dead. No doctor could save him then, when he became the lonely victim of his dream disasters and delusions."

Wilfred Owen was also a patient at Craiglockhart, and his treatment, and friendship with Sassoon, were catalysts for him to write his famous poetry. In fact it was in the hospital's magazine, *The Hydra*, that Owen produced some of his most deeply haunting pieces – ones that helped shape our cultural memory of the conflict.

Siegfried Sassoon wrote of the "dream disasters and delusions" that afflicted shell shock sufferers





## THE VIETNAM WAR

### Protesting the 'PTSD blues'

The Vietnam War was a watershed in the recognition of war trauma as a mental health condition. Some veterans, mirroring the civilian antiwar movement, became activists, protesting the war itself as well as a lack of mental health support. In 1971 at 'The Winter Soldier Investigation', 100 veterans met in Detroit to discuss war violence they had witnessed or participated in. "I am here because I have nightmares about things that happened to me and my friends," one of them declared.

Another landmark moment arrived in 1980, when Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was listed in the third edition of the American Psychological Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. In the mid-eighties, a state-mandated study recognised the prevalence and long-term impact of the condition upon veterans, citing depression, substance abuse, poor physical health and social problems.

Many veterans struggled to adapt to civilian life once the fighting was over. One of them, Louis A Griffiths, communicated his enduring torment via a poem, *PTSD Blues*:

*"You'll never know how many times  
I have to see him die / The thing that hurts  
the most / It took 30 years to cry"*

In all, around a quarter of American soldiers who served in Vietnam required psychological assistance as veterans. Their experiences undoubtedly drew attention to the gravity and long-term impact of military mental health issues.



**Fighting back** GIs protest against the Vietnam War, New York, 1968. The conflict was a landmark moment in the recognition of PTSD



**Outside the wire** US Marines on patrol in Helmand Province, 2010. The constant threat of Improvised Explosive Devices has had a corrosive effect on modern soldiers' mental wellbeing

## IRAQ AND BEYOND

### When car exhaust becomes mustard gas

Contemporary studies suggest that as many as one in six veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan have symptoms of PTSD, including flashbacks, anxiety, depression and irritability. In his 2015 book *The Evil Hours*, former soldier David J Morris writes: "In the traumatic universe the basic laws of matter are suspended: ceiling fans can be helicopters, car exhaust can be mustard gas."

Iraq veteran Kevin Powers portrays a soldier's guilt and trauma in his novel *The Yellow Birds*: "It felt like there was acid seeping down into your soul and then your soul is gone and knowing from being taught your whole life that there is no making up for what you are doing."

Research in Australia and the US suggests that rates of suicide for male veterans are twice as high as for civilian men; rates for female veterans are at least two-and-a-half times higher than their civilian counterparts. For some female soldiers, the trauma of war is compounded by the threat of sexual harassment.

Many veterans suffer with alcohol and drug addiction, and homelessness linked to poor mental health. The nature of modern conflict has, in many ways, exacerbated these problems. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), common in Iraq and Afghanistan, dominate the experience of being 'beyond the wire' outside of large

### You don't have to be a soldier to suffer the negative consequences of war trauma

bases. For soldiers on patrol, every step is potentially lethal. Hypervigilance is a fact of everyday life; feelings of powerlessness widespread.

Drone pilots are also suffering from PTSD, proving that you don't need to be in a close physical proximity to the violence to experience its psychological impacts. Nor do you have to be a soldier to suffer the negative consequences of war trauma: rates of domestic violence are significantly higher than average in the homes of veterans with PTSD. And we shouldn't forget civilian populations living in countries ravaged by conflict. In all too many cases, these have few resources to recognise or to treat the symptoms of war trauma. **H**

**Dr Emma Butcher** is a BBC New Generation Thinker, based at the University of Leicester. **Dr Hannah Partis-Jennings** is a lecturer in international relations and security at Loughborough University

## MORE FROM US

Hannah Partis-Jennings and Emma Butcher will be discussing war trauma on our podcast [historyextra.com/podcast](http://historyextra.com/podcast)



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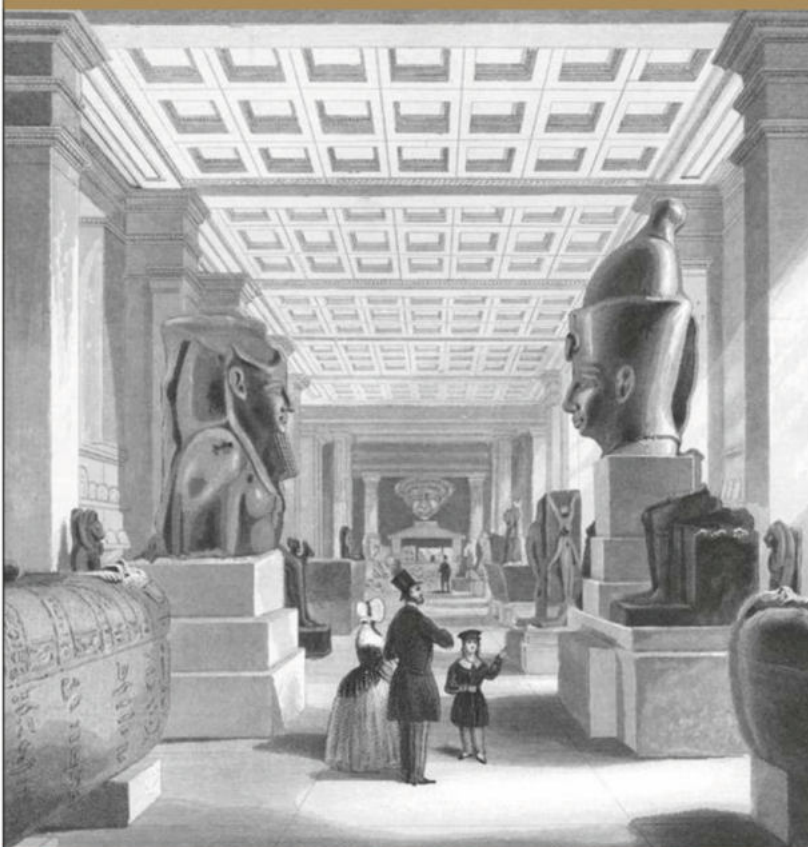
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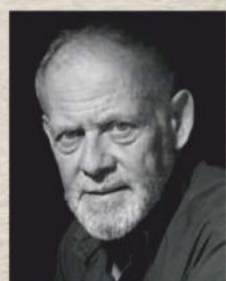
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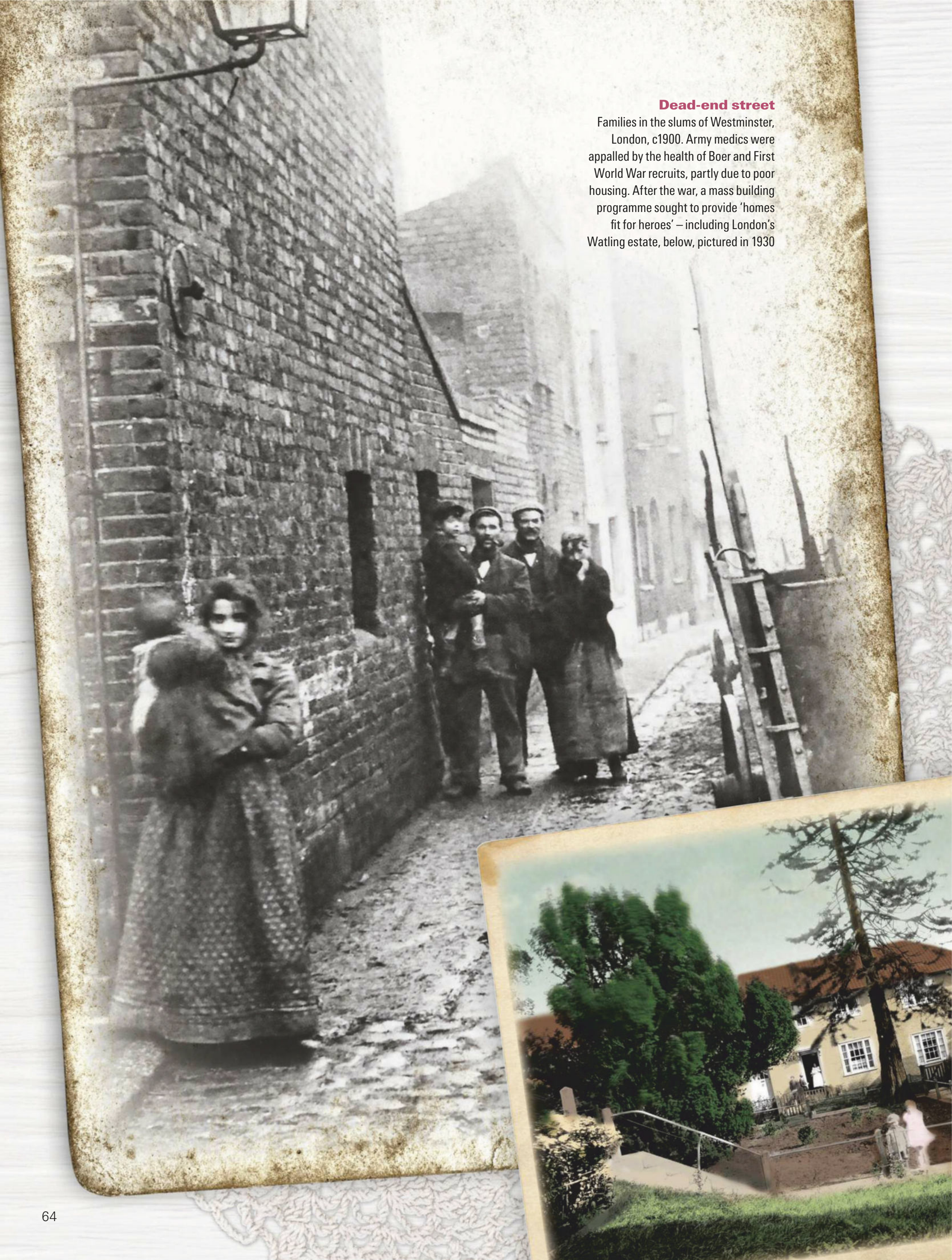


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### Dead-end street

Families in the slums of Westminster, London, c1900. Army medics were appalled by the health of Boer and First World War recruits, partly due to poor housing. After the war, a mass building programme sought to provide 'homes fit for heroes' – including London's Watling estate, below, pictured in 1930





# Out of the slums... into the suburbs

A century ago, the government triggered a massive housebuilding programme aimed at freeing Britons from the scourges of rats, damp, poor sanitation... and Bolshevism. **Eugene Byrne** chronicles Britain's council house revolution

**I**n the middle of the Sea Mills estate on the edge of Bristol there is an open green space generally known as Sea Mills Square, though it is actually a semi-circle. It was here, on 4 June 1919, that Dr Christopher Addison, president of the Local Government Board and the architect of the 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act, formally inaugurated Bristol's council house building scheme. A large crowd looked on.

Cutting the first sod, Dr Addison said he could not imagine a more glorious location for housing than Sea Mills, a greenfield site close to the upmarket suburbs of Sneyd Park and Stoke Bishop. Addison proclaimed himself happy that the famous and ancient city of Bristol was now at the forefront of the nation's great postwar drive to create new homes. Around the square, tidy red-brick houses, which are still there today, would be built in the coming years.

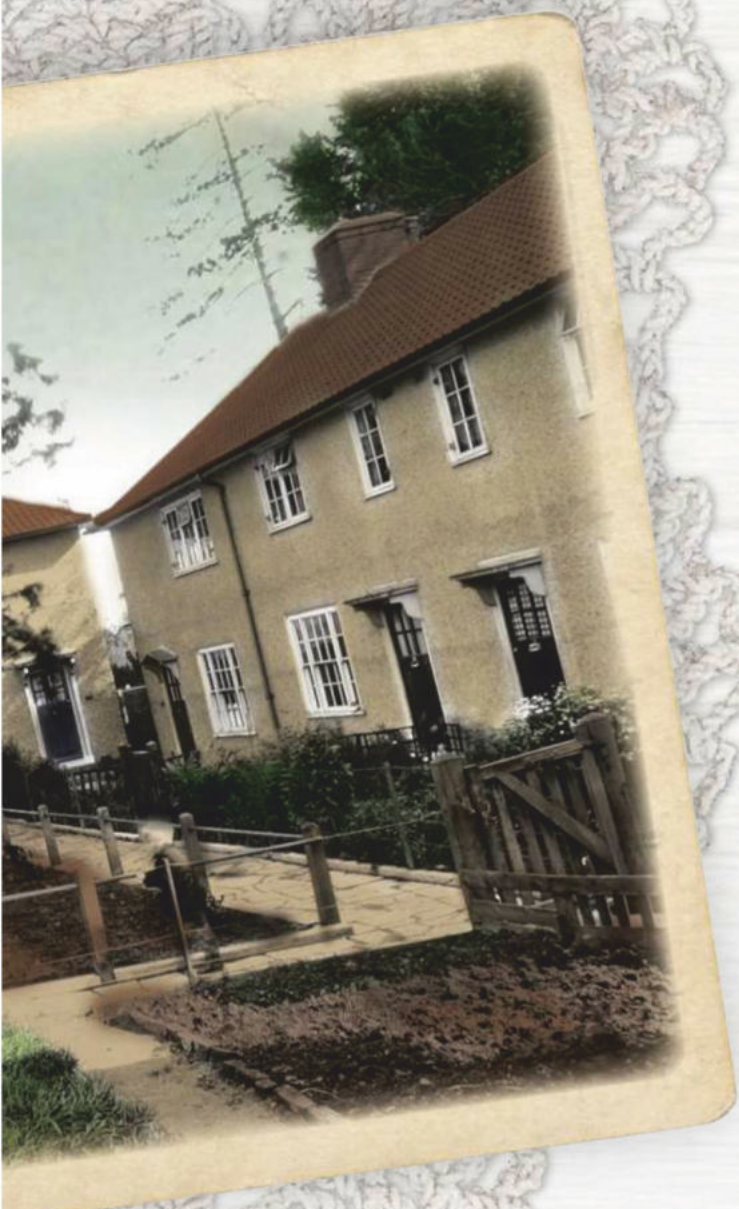
Bristol's lady mayoress planted an oak tree to mark the occasion, and the attending great and good drove off to inspect plans for the houses. That evening, Addison gave a speech in which he said that, under legislation just passed, he was to become the country's first minister of health, and that housing would most definitely be part of his responsibilities. Housing would remain the preserve of successive health ministers for decades to come, because everyone understood that

housing was a health issue.

His remarks reflected the fact that the living conditions of many of the poorest in urban Britain were truly shocking. Numerous Victorian and Edwardian social reformers and journalists had catalogued the atrocious living conditions of the poor in towns and cities around the country, yet little had been done about it. Rats, mice, lice, damp, dry rot, bad or non-existent sanitation and overcrowding all curtailed the lives and opportunities of millions of Britons. Army medical officers were appalled by the poor health of many recruits in the First World War, just as they had been during the Boer War less than a generation previously.

## A new blueprint

Councils had powers to build houses before 1919, though few used them. Just a handful of corporation housing schemes were carried out, notably in London, Glasgow and Liverpool. There was also a patchwork of working-class developments in major cities, run by charitable and philanthropic organisations. Most of these were quite practical, offering decent housing for decent rents, which would provide equally decent returns for investors – so-called 'five per cent philanthropy'. Many of the developments that survive are now homes to the comfortably off or very wealthy. London's Hampstead Garden Suburb, for instance, was started in





## Social housing

the early 1900s as an idealistic community where all social classes mixed, but poorer tenants were priced out decades ago.

The prewar schemes were seriously underpowered, and any well-intentioned council trying to clear its most egregious slums came up against the problem of finding sufficient affordable accommodation for displaced tenants. The war put the housing problem on hold, then made it worse. With labour and resources diverted to feeding the war machine, few new houses were built and little was done to maintain existing ones.

But the war also caused a massive cultural change within the establishment. The Victorian attitudes of minimal government intervention in economic and social affairs evaporated with the need to mobilise and direct the nation's resources. Now it was taken for granted that government would intervene more in peacetime, too.

Before the war's end, policymakers were already thinking about future housing. The influential Tudor Walters report, published in late 1918, laid out detailed standards for housebuilding. And by the time Dr Addison visited Sea Mills, the government had another pressing incentive to trigger a boom in housebuilding: self-preservation. The end of the First World War had ushered in a period of great political turmoil and uncertainty. There had been a revolution in Russia, and Germany and the Austrian empire appeared to be going the same way. Now the nervous British establishment saw signs of revolt at home. Irish nationalists were fighting for independence and labour unrest was rife on Glasgow's 'Red Clydeside' and in other cities. There were even police strikes.

In the general election of December 1918, Prime Minister David Lloyd George successfully traded on his history of prewar radicalism, and promised "a country fit for heroes to live in". So the Housing, Town Planning &c Act of 1919 was partly a product of national solidarity at the war's end, and of establishment goodwill towards working-class people who had made so many sacrifices. But it was also driven by the need to head off discontent. In an oft-quoted observation by Waldorf Astor, parliamentary secretary of the Local Government Board: "The money we are going to spend on housing is an insurance against Bolshevism and revolution."

### Parlour games

The Addison Act marked the start of wholesale government intervention in the housing market. The costs would be shared by central government through subsidies, by local government through the rates, and by the tenants through the rents they would pay. Construction of new estates started all over



**Home comforts** A housewife makes a sandwich in the 1930s. Unlike many Victorian terraces, council houses offered gas cookers and inside toilets

**“All my life, I’d had to go down a yard to the toilet. You can imagine what it was like having it next to your bedroom. You felt like a queen”**

the country and many of the first dwellings that resulted were of a high quality, but there were nowhere near enough of them.

By 1923 the Conservatives were back in power, and this brought a change in housing policy. Neville Chamberlain, as Conservative minister of health, oversaw a housing act based on the belief that private enterprise would provide housing more cheaply and efficiently, and which offered a smaller subsidy favouring private builders. In general, homes built under the Chamberlain Act were smaller, and usually came without a parlour.

This changed the following year during

Ramsay MacDonald's short-lived Labour government. Health minister John Wheatley increased subsidies, insisted that all houses be built for rent and secured the confidence of the building industry by promising the scheme would last 15 years. It was scaled back in the economic crisis of the early 30s, but the Wheatley Act would account for the majority of council houses built between the wars.

By now, the ideological differences that would dominate Labour and Conservative debates over council housing for decades to come were clear. Labour politicians wanted good-quality housing for all, while Conservatives wanted to encourage owner-occupation. They viewed council housing as just being for those who could not afford to buy.

But between the wars, council houses were aspirational. The rents were often quite high, and while this did nothing for the poorest people living in the most abject conditions, the thinking was that improved housing would 'trickle down'. As more and more moved into new homes, the quantity and quality of privately rented housing would have to improve.

Moving into a home on a council estate meant you were going up in the world.





**New kids on the block** Children on a housing estate in Niddrie, Edinburgh. The area was developed to rehome families from the Canongate slums in the city centre

Countless families left old Victorian terraces and courts in the middle of grimy industrial cities for bright and airy estates, and a home with a garden and an inside toilet. You might also have a bathroom and a gas cooker and perhaps a parlour – a ‘front room’ – for guests and special occasions. There was often (but not always to start with) electricity as well.

“Compared with the old houses they were a dream to keep clean,” remembered a woman who moved to a new home on Liverpool’s Larkhill estate in 1922. “And then having running hot water, well, that was wonderful, especially for women with young kiddies. All my life, till we came here, I’d had to go down a yard to the toilet. You can imagine the difference it made, having the toilet next to your bedroom, especially in winter. You felt like a queen.”

### Neat gardens – but no pigeons

Would-be tenants had to jump through a lot of hoops. You would be interviewed by a council official, who quizzed you about your income, children and whether you kept pets. Women might be asked about how often they did their washing.

One woman allocated a council house

recalled: “When I moved here in 1929, you needed a letter from the Holy Ghost himself to get a council house. You had to show your birth certificate, marriage lines, rent book, everything. You see, they had to make sure you were decent. It used to be a really lovely estate, had a really good class of tenant.”

Tenancy agreements included a long litany of dos and don’ts: you cannot keep animals or livestock (chickens or rabbits might be overlooked, but pigeons usually weren’t); no banging nails into any of the walls; no erecting a garden shed without permission; keep the front garden “neat and cultivated”; clean the windows once a week; get the chimneys swept once a year; no repainting the front door; and definitely no sub-letting. The rent collector would report any infractions back to the Housing Department. In practice, though, the majority of evictions were for non-payment of rent.

A council home might be a palace compared to your previous abode, but there could be drawbacks. Estates were often miles from the family breadwinner’s workplace. (This goes some way to explaining why the number of privately owned cars on UK roads rocketed from around 100,000 in 1919 to more than

## New homes, new Britain

Four ways in which council housing changed a nation



### The growth of the garden

Tenancy agreements obliged council householders to keep their front gardens neat and tidy, and many grew vegetables in their back gardens. Gardening clubs sprouted on many estates to share knowledge, tools, seeds and cuttings. On middle-class estates, a neat garden was an essential hallmark of respectability.



### The rise of the car

People on new developments had to travel further to work. In 1919, there were just over 100,000 privately owned cars on UK roads. By 1939, there were more than 2 million. Public transport in regional cities also shifted from trams running on fixed rails to motor bus services, whose routes could be more easily modified.



### Smaller families

Suburban homes were more healthy, with lower infant mortality, and couples of all classes felt they could safely restrict the number of children they had in order to maintain their new lifestyles.



### The age of the housewife

As estates were often far from places of employment, many middle and working-class women had no choice but to be full-time home-makers. But women did have the vote, and politicians had to talk up the needs of ‘the housewife’.





### Root of the problem

Children tend a garden in Hampstead Garden Suburb. This tree-lined north London neighbourhood was envisioned as a place where all classes and income groups could live together, but poorer families were priced out



### Chequered history

The interior of a home on London's Kingsmead estate in 1939. But despite the comparative luxury, housewives reported feeling alienated

**People became nostalgic for the warmth and friendliness of their former communities, no matter how squalid and smoky**

2 million in 1939.) When you added public transport fares into the rent, such a wonderful home might be beyond your means.

There were other problems, too. The Becontree estate was a vast development, built in the Barking/Dagenham area by the London County Council between 1921 and the mid-30s. One day, the story goes, a policeman was patrolling the estate when he was stopped by a woman in floods of tears: "We've just moved in," she said, "and I went for a stroll and now I can't find my house!" (The story may be a legend; it gets told about other big estates around the UK, too.)

### Flats in mid-air

By the 30s, writers, journalists and sociologists had descended on the new estates, and didn't always like what they found. The well-travelled George Orwell couldn't understand the British preference for suburban semis instead of continental-style blocks of flats in town: "Apparently a house in the middle of an unbroken block of houses a hundred yards long seems to them more their own than a flat situated in mid-air."

Women, particularly housewives who were stuck at home while their husbands spent long hours working and commuting, reported feeling lonely and alienated. People became nostalgic for the warmth and friendliness of their former urban communities, no matter how squalid and smoky.

Nearly every estate was built in a hurry, with little initial regard for community facilities. People moved into brand new homes in places where the nearest shops, schools, libraries, churches, cinemas and pubs were miles away. This was a commercial advantage for some: the van selling fruit; the man selling fish from a motorcycle side-car; hucksters trying to sell overpriced encyclopedias (because council estates were aspirational). Meanwhile, George Orwell, noting how the pub was often the heart of an urban working-class community, observed that the few built on estates were often "dismal sham-Tudor places fitted out by big brewery companies and very expensive".

Other commentators were more positive. In 1937, the poet John Betjeman was broadcasting a talk from the BBC's Bristol studios, and mentioned the estate where Addison's Oak had been planted 18 years previously:

"I drove... around my favourite parts of Bristol with a friend. Bristol was looking at its best. Sunset behind the Avon Gorge and the new Sea Mills estate, with a surprising beauty, showing off in the evening sunlight; and vistas of trees and fields and pleasant cottages that the magic estate has managed to create." **H**

Eugene Byrne is a historian, fiction writer and journalist specialising in the history of the British Isles



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“Adolf Hitler had a particular admiration for settler colonialism in the United States”

Brendan Simms on *Hitler*  
▶ page 70

## DAY-TO-DAY LIFE IN 1939

“There was mass euthanasia of pet cats and dogs in Britain once war broke out”

Robert Crowcroft on *1939: A People’s History*  
▶ page 78



# "Hitler didn't see Germany's main enemy as Soviet communism, but Anglo-American capitalism"

**BRENDAN SIMMS** talks to Ellie Cawthorne about his new biography of Hitler, which argues that an unshakeable obsession with Britain and America dominated the dictator's thinking

**Ellie Cawthorne:** Why did you think that a new biography of Hitler was needed?

**Brendan Simms:** Because I think that some of the most important things that we think we know about Hitler are actually not true. Primarily, I argue that Hitler saw his main enemies not to be communism and the Soviet Union, but actually Anglo-American capitalism. That's a fairly fundamental point, which I think has been missed in the previous literature.

I also argue that, in the beginning, Hitler wasn't actually aiming for world domination. Instead, he began with a concept of international parity – he wanted to establish a role for Germany *among* the other great world powers. But the way in which events unfolded made it imperative, from his point of view, to seek something like global domination because he thought that was the only way he could make the world safe for Germany. As circumstances changed and he realised he was going to have to take the war to the Anglo-Saxon powers, he became ever-more ambitious. Not so much out of greed as out of fear. Fear was the overarching sentiment.

**Can you tell us more about Hitler's attitude towards Britain and the US, and where this idea came from?**

Its roots go back to the First World War, which was decisive for the development of Hitler's worldview in two important respects. Firstly, he spent most of the war fighting the British empire, and emerged out of the conflict with a very strong sense of the toughness of the British. His enduring impression was that they were the enemy that had really done for the German Reich.

The other important encounter was with the US, specifically with American prisoners in the summer of 1918. At this point, the German

army was on its final desperate push to try to defeat the British and the French on the western front before US troops arrived in force. Hitler was given two American soldiers to escort back to brigade headquarters. He subsequently interpreted this as an encounter with German emigrants, deducing a particular worldview about what had gone wrong with the Reich over the 19th century and early 20th century. He argued that it was the pay-off for hundreds of years of demographic haemorrhaging of the highest-value German blood to fertilise the territory of the enemy.

This profound sense of anxiety around emigration and being at war with your own racial stock was an idea to which he returned.

It's quite an irony, of course, that in provoking war, Hitler actually brought about the very thing that he most feared: in Dwight Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, and General Spaatz, commander of the US Strategic Air Forces in Europe, you did indeed have German-Americans coming back to clobber the Fatherland.

**How did these concerns about emigration shape Hitler's policies?**

After 1933, he engaged in a couple of pretty high-profile 'recoveries' of people who had emigrated to the US: former regimental comrades who were brought back with considerable fanfare. The narrative was clear: do not be seduced by the American dream. In the late 1930s, he even briefly experimented with a really quite grotesque plan for an international 'exchange' of German-Americans for German Jews.

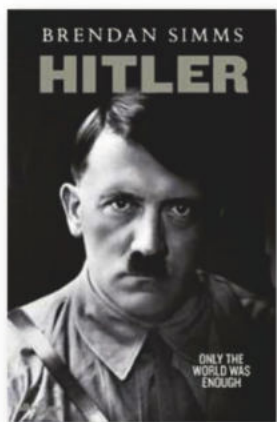
The emigration argument was also the underpinning of the project of *lebensraum* – or 'living space' – in the east. When it came to plans for settling the eastern territories, Hitler specifically called the areas around the Volga the 'Mississippi' of the German Reich, and stated that he hoped to settle these areas not only with the demographic overflow from Europe but also with returning German-Americans. While the project of *lebensraum* is well known, its connection to emigration has not been discussed before.

**You argue that as well as feeling threatened by Britain and America, Hitler also admired them. How so?**

His admiration for the British empire, as a project of colonisation overseas, is well known. But what is less known is that he also had a particular admiration for settler colonialism in the United States, which he saw as a model for Germany's eastern expansion.

Hitler admired these countries as repositories of racial value. He saw them as being constructed around an extremely strong Anglo-Saxon spine, reinforced by waves of European – particularly German – migration. In the 1920s, Hitler was very explicit about the fact that he found the US culturally and economically attractive. You can add to that an admiration for the technological advances and consumerism seen in the US, and the system of national parks. In fact, there were only a small number of areas of US life he didn't admire.

I think Hitler's feelings of fear and admiration for Britain and the US are difficult to disentangle. Initially, his experience of the First World War – strengthened by the experience of the punitive peace settlement and exacerbated by everything that happened in German domestic politics in the early 1920s – led to fear. That fear then produced admiration, which led to his attempt at a rapprochement with Britain and America. But when that admiration was repulsed, it triggered hatred, anxiety and a sense of rejection, which in turn increased his fear. It was a vicious circle.



**Hitler: Only the World Was Enough**  
by Brendan Simms  
(Allen Lane, 704 pages, £30)





**PROFILE**

Professor of the history of international relations at the University of Cambridge, **Brendan Simms**' previous books include *Britain's Europe: A Thousand Years of Conflict and Cooperation* (2017) and *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (2001), which was shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
IAN FARRELL





**Hitler's ideology is generally seen as stressing the racial strength of German people. However, you suggest that he was equally driven by insecurity about German weakness.**

Hitler had a profound sense of Germany's demographic and racial weakness. He saw it as a fragmented polity, a country that had been historically divided between Protestants and Catholics ever since the Reformation, as well as being divided by class, ideology and, above all, regionalism. In particular, he was deeply concerned by the phenomenon of Bavarian separatism. For example, his attempted coup in the Munich putsch of 1923 was as much a move against Bavarian separatism as it was against the central German government.

Compare this idea of a weak and fragmented German Reich with Anglo-America, which Hitler saw as a kind of racial paragon, the embodiment of everything that had gone right in racial history. From Hitler's perspective, these factors were mutually reinforcing – Germany's demographic and racial weakness in relation to Anglo-America forced the country into a negative spiral.

**How did he plan to combat this perceived German inferiority?**

One of the key things I want people to take away from the book is that next to his murderous 'negative eugenics', Hitler also had a highly problematic concept of 'positive eugenics'. In his mind, killing millions of Jews and other 'undesirables' was only the first step. That alone would not be sufficient to ensure the survival of the German people in a highly competitive world dominated not only by the so-called 'world Jewry', but also the Anglo-Saxon powers.

As such, the idea of 'racial elevation' was absolutely critical to Hitler. Essentially, his argument was that the attraction of Anglo-America was one of living standards. In other words, Germans needed to match the 'American dream'. They should have access to travel, mod cons, radios, autobahns. Standard of living was also inextricably intertwined in his mind with the idea of *lebensraum*. He believed that once Germany had expanded east, Germans would then, over decades and centuries, be able to elevate their living standards to the level of Anglo-America.

In Hitler's thinking, there was always a tension between timelines. On the one hand, he was always in a hurry due to circumstances – because his life was short, because Germany was in a dire situation. But on the other hand, he saw himself as part of a centuries' long project of which he would only witness the beginning.

**You argue that you can't understand Hitler's anti-Semitism without understanding his anti-capitalism. Why?**

Although it's somewhat paradoxical, Hitler regarded Anglo-America not only as the repository of high racial value, but also as the protagonist of international capitalism, dominated by the Jews. He saw high finance as the real ruler of the world, a force that had enslaved Germany and reduced it to the status of a colony.

The contradiction is that, while he argued that the presence of Jews corrupted and enfeebled states, for some reason it didn't seem to corrupt or enfeeble Britain or the US, except in so far as it induced what he regarded as a form of 'false consciousness'. In other words, these states didn't recognise that their true community of interest was *with*, not opposed to, the German Reich.

**// Hitler believed that the Germans needed to match the 'American dream'. They should have access to travel, radios and autobahns //**



**Formative years** Hitler (right) pictured with comrades in 1916. His experience in the First World War shaped his later worldview, argues Brendan Simms

**How does this new reading alter the way that we should think about Nazi-Soviet relations?**

There was a clear hierarchy of enemies in Hitler's mind, and the threat posed by the Soviet Union and communism was by no means as serious as the threat posed by the British empire or the United States. You can see this in the distribution of German resources during the Second World War, which runs contrary to many things you might read about the overall importance of the eastern front. By the end of 1943 at the latest, the majority of the German war effort was dedicated to fighting the so-called 'Anglo-Saxons', and in 1944–45 the preponderance was greater still. The western allies absorbed the larger share of Hitler's intellectual and rhetorical bandwidth, right to the very end.

I also believe that the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, and the quest for *lebensraum* in the east, was not primarily driven by concern about communism, but concern about Anglo-America. The east was simply a convenient, closely located area that could be easily controlled. Overseas expansion wouldn't work because the British and Americans controlled the seas. In that sense, the attack on the Soviet Union was nothing personal from the point of view of opposing communism. Rather, Hitler saw communism as an opportunity. The fact that the Soviet Union was afflicted with the virus of communism, he said, would make it easier to conquer.

**When you cut through Hitler's polemics and propaganda, what kind of man do you find?**

I think it's very hard to say anything conclusively about his personality because so much of it was artifice. His image was carefully curated from quite an early stage. Famously, he practised gestures in front of the mirror and took lessons on how to present himself in public. So it's difficult to tell what you're getting in terms of the real Hitler. Hitler was obviously politically psychopathic, there's no question about that, but in so far as I could grasp him, he was clearly not psychopathic in any narrowly medical sense. He was able to relate normally to other people, and was not afraid to unburden himself, to unbutton, with people he knew.

The crucial point is that I don't think there's anything in Hitler the man that tells you anything that's particularly useful about Hitler the politician. So, while a biographer might be able to get a bit of a sense of Hitler's personality, that's not my primary preoccupation. What I'm most interested in are his policies, and the ideas that informed them. **H**

#### MORE FROM US

Listen to Ellie Cawthorne's interview with Brendan Simms on our podcast soon at [historyextra.com/podcast](https://historyextra.com/podcast)



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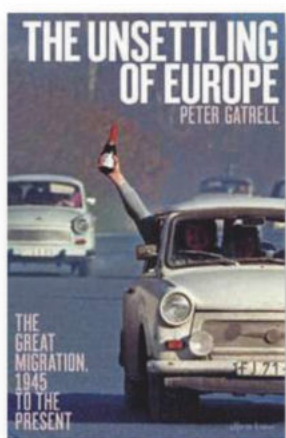


**Brave new world**  
A group of 700 West Indian immigrants wait in Southampton's Customs Hall in 1956

## MIGRATION

# Movement of the people

**RICHARD J EVANS** welcomes a major study that provides some much-needed historical perspective on the migration dilemmas dividing Europe



**The Unsettling of Europe: The Great Migration, 1945 to the Present**  
by Peter Gatrell

Allen Lane, 576 pages, £30

In recent years, it's hardly been possible to open a newspaper or turn on the television news without seeing distressing pictures of tiny, rickety and overcrowded boats attempting to ferry migrants across the

Mediterranean, sometimes sinking or capsizing. We are all too familiar with images of bodies washed up on the shore, of huddles of migrant men, women and children cowering in the back of people-smugglers' lorries, or of crowds of would-be immigrants at border checkpoints or in makeshift and supposedly temporary camps.

This seems, on the face of it, to be a development of the last few years – and yet, as Peter Gatrell reminds us in this major new study, it isn't really very new at all. In telling the story of migration into Europe and across the continent, from country to country, as well as within the borders of individual states,

Gatrell provides a much-needed historical perspective on our current dilemmas. It is one of the great virtues of Gatrell's book that he pays full attention to eastern Europe – as one might expect, given his previous incarnation as an economic historian of Russia. Too many previous studies of the topic have focused almost exclusively on the west, and Gatrell rightly seeks here to redress the balance. Moreover, unlike other students of the topic, he doesn't confine himself to political debates and the formulation of policy, but examines the cultural processing of migration in literature and film, and lets the migrants speak for themselves, often



providing graphic and moving testimony of their experiences.

The book begins with the late 1940s, when the resettlement of ‘displaced persons’ – mostly forced labourers recruited by the Nazis during the war, numbering 7 million at their height – faced the United Nations and its various agencies with a variety of challenges, especially when they did not want to return to their original homelands, as was the case with many eastern Europeans repulsed by the blanket of communist dictatorship falling across their countries at the start of

## // By 1960, governments across Europe were actively encouraging immigration to provide vital labour //

the Cold War. In addition, some 11 million ethnic Germans had either fled eastern Europe or been brutally expelled at the end of the war, and had to be resettled in West Germany – a process described in detail by RM Douglas in his book *Orderly and Humane*, whose title refers ironically to the Allies’ mandate for the way in which the expulsions were supposed to be carried out.

Gatrell might have provided more detail on the expulsions, but prefers instead to focus on the successful integration of the refugees and expellees into West German society in the course of the 1950s. As in other countries, such huge numbers of immigrants kept wages low and facilitated economic reconstruction after the war. By 1960 or so, governments across Europe were actively encouraging immigration to provide vital labour for what in Germany was termed the ‘economic miracle’. The famous boatload of West Indian immigrants carried to the UK on the HMT *Empire Windrush* in 1948, along with many others from various parts of the British empire, especially India and Pakistan, were part of this Europe-wide phenomenon. The process was not without its tensions, and racial and cultural clashes occurred in many parts of Europe (the 1958 Notting Hill race riots in London were a particularly notorious example). But on the whole, governments saw the economic advantages of immigration despite such problems. In similar fashion, the Soviet Union fostered economic growth in Central Asia and Siberia in its ‘Virgin Lands’ campaign, in the course of which some 300,000

Russian and Ukrainian citizens headed out to the east to play their part.

On top of this, very substantial numbers of immigrants came to Europe in the wake of decolonisation: hundreds of thousands of colonial administrators and settlers, for example, returned to Portugal from newly independent colonies such as Mozambique, or went back to Italy from Libya and other former colonial possessions. Meanwhile, the fallout from the Algerian war of independence was on an even larger scale as far as France was concerned. All of this came to an end with the global economic downturn that followed the huge oil-price hike engineered by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1973. As unemployment rates soared across Europe, governments stopped encouraging immigration, imposing restrictions on it instead, and urging migrants to return home.

But many of them stayed, sparking a debate between advocates of integration and supporters of multiculturalism that has continued right up to the present. Certainly, the cultural impact of immigrants on European societies has been notable in many ways, most obviously in the popularity of foods such as the döner kebab in Germany or chicken korma in the UK. But the economic impact has aroused more hostility, with accusations of immigrants lowering wages, above all after the crisis of 2008. Populist politicians have won mass support in recent years by whipping up fears that millions of refugees, especially from the war-torn Middle East, will supposedly undermine European civilisation. Governments have responded with a mixture of deterrence, detention and deportation, and Gatrell castigates them for their failure to think beyond such negative responses to what too many of them have described as a ‘migration crisis’.

In calling for a more imaginative, less punitive approach, this book reminds us of the benefits migration has brought to European societies since the Second World War, and the considerable encouragement states have given to it from time to time. I have only one quarrel with this otherwise excellent book, and that’s with its starting point in 1945. As Gatrell surely knows, migration to and from Europe, and within it, has a much longer history, and it’s a pity he doesn’t refer to it, if only in a few paragraphs. But this shouldn’t obscure the fact that he has delivered an absorbing and highly readable narrative that ought to be required reading for anyone concerned with modern migration, and not just in Europe either. **H**

.....  
**Richard J Evans’s** books include *The Pursuit of Power: Europe, 1815–1914* (Allen Lane)

## FROM FACT TO FICTION

### Edge of the empire

Author **Adrian Goldsworthy** on the thrill of rebuilding Britain’s Roman past in his novel *Brigantia*

#### Was Roman Britain as wild and dangerous as we might imagine?

Probably. I see these stories as Westerns set in c100 AD. Frontiers by their nature bring together different people and ideas, and this was the outer fringes of the Roman empire, not long after the Romans arrived. We now know they would stay for 300 years, but at the time the locals did not. So this was a time of real transition.

#### How were you inspired by the real Vindolanda fort and the tablets there?

Vindolanda is an incredibly atmospheric place and the finds – of shoes and the like – make you feel much closer to those who once lived there. The writing tablets give you glimpses into the everyday life of officers, merchants and their wives, and the idea of weaving stories around them had been growing in my mind for a long time. The first novel in the trilogy, *Vindolanda*, is based on the famous birthday party invitation from the wife of one commander to another at Vindolanda.

#### Your book features Romans and Britons. Which did you find the most interesting to bring to life?

We know most about the Romans, though even then there is a lot we don’t know. For the locals, you have to invent a good deal. I wanted to have good and bad people on all sides, have them think and act differently, and create a plausible story that never conflicts with what we know.

#### Sources on this period are fairly scarce. Is that challenging or freeing?

It’s very different from my ‘day job’ of writing non-fiction about Rome, but it’s liberating. We know next to nothing about the events in Britain in these years. That’s frustrating for a historian, but a great opportunity for a novelist – I have the freedom to make things fit the story. As a historian it’s my duty to admit what we don’t know; as a novelist, I fill in the gaps.

**Brigantia**  
by Adrian Goldsworthy  
(Head of Zeus,  
464 pages, £18.99)

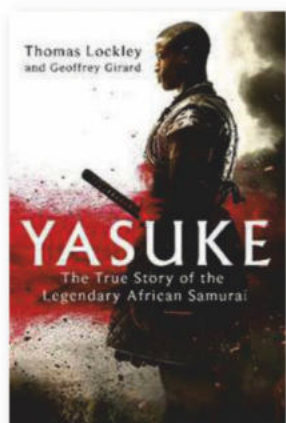




## JAPAN

# Wayfaring stranger

**CHRISTOPHER HARDING** hails a history-fiction hybrid telling the extraordinary tale of an African soldier who fought in the 16th-century Japanese civil wars



**Yasuke: The True Story of the Legendary African Samurai**  
by Thomas Lockley and Geoffrey Girard  
Sphere, 480 pages, £20

In the closing decades of the 1500s, more than a century of civil war in Japan was being brought to a painful, bloody conclusion, under the leaderships, one after the other, of the 'three unifiers': Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu – founder of a shogunate that went on to rule Japan right up to the 1860s. Compelling characters, epic battles and the added spice of non-Japanese involvement – European Jesuits, in particular, plying a mixed trade of religious evangelism, political meddling and valuable commerce – have helped these crucial, formative years for Japan remain a favourite among readers of history and historical fiction alike.

*Yasuke* is an intriguing attempt to combine these two genres, by telling the extraordinary story of an African soldier who was picked up by the Jesuits in Goa, India, and went on to serve as bodyguard and attendant to the Italian Jesuit Alessandro Valignano. The two travelled together to Japan in 1579, where Yasuke became one of Oda Nobunaga's retainers, fighting for him in battle before mysteriously disappearing from the historical record in 1582.

Little reliable detail exists on Yasuke's life. So what Thomas Lockley and Geoffrey Girard have done here – the former an academic, the latter a writer of fiction and non-fiction – is offer a blend of biography, background on Japan during these tumultuous years, and extensive dramatic imaginings. We move from Yasuke's capture by slavers in Africa, through his voyages and experiences of Japanese life – including a meeting with Nobunaga, fascinated by Yasuke's skin, strength and stories of faraway places – and on to his service in battle, and some possible scenarios for his life after 1582.

An enormous amount of thought and

research has evidently gone into this approach, and mostly it works well. We are treated to a vivid evocation of a fascinating period of Japan's history, with enough context and suggestions for further reading to cater to a wide audience. Inevitably, the challenges of fusing two forms reveal themselves at times. Where the distinctions are made clear, we get some clunky transitions: between a scholar reflecting on the limitations of his sources and a fiction writer giving his imagination free rein. Seamlessness brings perils of its own: Yasuke's encounter with Oda is wonderfully done, but without a referencing system or a prior discussion about the book's approach, it isn't clear which

elements are rooted in the source material.

Similarly, while fans of historical fiction will find much to enjoy, some may wish more risks had been taken. Yasuke could have been invested with greater psychological complexity as a means of balancing out the crude objectification to which we find him subjected by the awed Japanese.

This fuller characterisation has been accomplished in Japanese novels, video games and TV dramas on the story – and the English-speaking world looks set to receive the same treatment, with plans afoot for a film about his life, starring *Black Panther* star Chadwick Boseman. While we wait, we can celebrate what Lockley and Girard have given us here: a detailed, passionate portrait, taking an unconventional approach to an unusual life. **H**

**// Nobunaga is fascinated by Yasuke's skin, strength and tales of exotic places //**

**Christopher Harding** is a senior lecturer in Asian history at the University of Edinburgh and the author of *Japan Story: In Search of a Nation, 1850 to the Present* (Allen Lane)

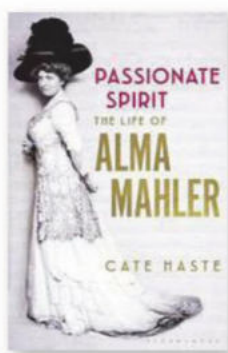


**Big in Japan** A 16th-century Japanese screen image of Catholic missionary Francis Xavier and his entourage. Yasuke served as the bodyguard to an Italian Jesuit before fetching up in the service of warlord Oda Nobunaga



BIOGRAPHY

# The art of loving



## Passionate Spirit: The Life of Alma Mahler

by Cate Haste  
Bloomsbury, 496 pages, £26

This immensely readable book recounts the life of a great 20th-century socialite, Alma Mahler, née Schindler. Haste plunders Mahler's astonishingly frank diaries and letters to reveal a mercurial and sensual personality.

Born into fin-de-siècle Vienna, Mahler had a glittering social circle, which embraced the musicians Strauss, Debussy and her first husband, Gustav Mahler, whose death left her a wealthy young widow. She knew the artists Klimt (her first crush), Rodin and Oskar Kokoschka (her on-off lover). And there were writers, architects (her second husband, Walter Gropius), psychiatrists (Freud), scientists and priests. But because Haste focuses closely on her subject, this fascinating cultural and political world remains largely in the background.

Mahler's endlessly waxing and waning

passions are documented in capitalised diary declarations of being "IN/NOT IN LOVE". And this creates a problem. Haste suggests that she was a frustrated composer. But although various women did enjoy successful musical careers, Mahler did little to further her own musical ambitions. Instead she lived through men, and even then declared: "All I love in a man is his achievement." Once she had them, she usually lost interest.

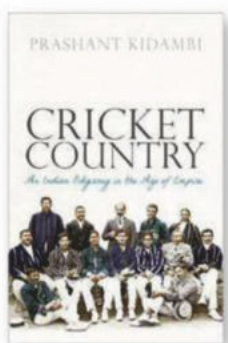
Wisely, Haste doesn't whitewash Mahler. Despite the bohemian company she kept, she was conservative, monarchist and anti-Semitic. When the First World War broke out, she projected the drama onto herself. Haste rightly identifies this as staggering self-aggrandising.

More revelatory is the ghastliness of her lovers. Gustav Mahler subjugated her, and (unforgivably) read Kant to her when she was in labour. Kokoschka commissioned (and later beheaded) a life-sized doll of her. Gropius effectively kidnapped her by dragging her onto his train to Hanover. Alma Mahler was remarkably consistent in her inconsistency, but Haste's account reveals 50 shades of derangement in the men who loved her. **H**

.....  
**Natasha Loges**, reader in musicology at the Royal College of Music

INDIA

# Special delivery



## Cricket Country

by Prashant Kidambi  
OUP, 448 pages, £25

When, in the summer of 1911, a squad of barefoot Indian men of the Mohun Bagan football team

defeated the British military East Yorkshire Regiment team in Calcutta to win the coveted Indian FA Shield, it exploded the myth of racial superiority on which British imperialism was based, and struck a symbolic blow against the empire. In contrast, the organisers of the first all-India cricket tour of Britain and Ireland, taking place that same coronation summer, sought to smother the flames of anti-colonial violence that had engulfed India and London, and express their loyalty to empire by promoting fraternal relations on the cricket field.

The team from Bombay was chosen on the basis of religion rather than region or merit alone, consisting of six Parsis, five Hindus, three Muslims and a Sikh captain. The tour was brought about by a coalition of the imperial

sporting establishment and Bombay's mercantile business elite, the Parsis.

*Cricket Country* explores both the history of imperial British cricket in India and colonial Indian cricket in Britain, as well as cricket as a vehicle for nation-building, cultural diplomacy, imperial pedagogy and masculinity, but at its heart tells the tale of a group of men in search of sporting glory. The team's poor showing in Britain was blamed on excessive heat, a punishing schedule, the absence of the legendary batsman Ranjitsinhji and the disappearance of the team's captain and his private secretary, which significantly weakened the order. However, one player, the Dalit (or 'untouchable') spinner Palwankar Baloo, past his prime at 36, overcame all obstacles, including caste discrimination on and off the pitch, to take more than 100 wickets and save the team from ignominy.

Prashant Kidambi traces the story in great detail, which will delight cricket enthusiasts, but has less to offer a wider readership. Nevertheless Baloo, hero of the tour and the book, deserves greater recognition, not just as a sporting icon but as a Dalit pioneer at a time when, even over a century later, the group's rights are still imperilled in India. **H**

.....  
**Shompa Lahiri**, author of *Indian Mobilities in the West* (Palgrave Macmillan)

## Prashant Kidambi on the history of cricket in India

**"We should think of cricket as a cultural resource. It was used by different sections of Indian society for different purposes. The Parsis used it to demonstrate their Britishness, the Indian princes saw it as an entry point into the imperial establishment, and for oppressed minorities such as Dalits, it was used in a quest for social justice, and became a rebuttal of the discrimination that they had to confront."**



## Susan Oosthuizen on the origins of Englishness

**"By around AD 600, the kings of Kent were already writing laws in English. By this time, they were also referring to the peoples who lived in what we now call England as *Angli*, even though they were sub-divided between any number of political units. How did that happen? Who knows. But I don't think it happened as a result of immigration from north-west Europe."**



## Robert Poole on the 1819 Peterloo massacre

**"What happened that day in Manchester caused national shock and outrage. Despite all their efforts, the government lost the propaganda war very quickly and the epithet 'Peterloo' – a reference to Waterloo – stuck. It polarised Britain. If you were a Tory or a High Tory, you believed that a revolution had been averted, but most of the middle classes and the working classes believed together that the authorities had gone much too far."**



MORE FROM US

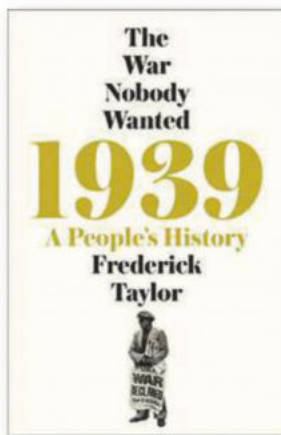
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## SECOND WORLD WAR

# Home truths

**ROBERT CROWCROFT** enjoys a social history that uses newspapers, diaries and private letters to build a picture of the people's reactions to the outbreak of war



## 1939: A People's History

by Frederick Taylor  
Picador, 368 pages, £25

Frederick Taylor's new book covers the 12 months prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. It eschews a focus on political,

diplomatic and military actors and instead endeavours to piece together a history of the times from the perspective of 'ordinary' men and women. The book focuses on popular reactions in Britain and Germany to the mounting crisis that eventually culminated in war. Self-consciously a 'people's history', Taylor's work argues that there was a marked lack of widespread public enthusiasm for war. This is perhaps unsurprising, given how potent memories of the slaughter of the First World War remained.

Taylor's desire to explore how it felt to be an 'ordinary' person is founded on a diverse range of source material. British sources include Mass-Observation social research, newspapers, diaries, private correspondence and the repository of audio recordings at the Imperial War Museum. German sources extend from newspapers to the records of the Gestapo, the SS security service and private diaries. Together, these materials enable Taylor to paint an engaging picture: he is particularly good at weaving together vignettes, character sketches and humorous asides to recreate an atmosphere of febrile anxiety.

Along the way, we encounter everyday British folk, as conscription approaches, worrying about their courage and whether they will be up to the task; the British government offering grants to build air-raid shelters; the stubborn persistence of 'normal' life as people go the cinema to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Gone With the Wind*; a German serial killer and rapist awaiting execution; IRA bombs in London; an official Nazi crackdown on political satire and jokes ("political joking around is a remnant of liberalism", as Goebbels put it); the mass euthanasia of pet cats and dogs in Britain once war has broken



**Everyday people** A boy, his neighbour and his pet dog outside an air-raid shelter in south-west London, August 1940. When war was declared, animals were euthanised en masse in the capital

## // As conscription arrived, Brits worried about their courage and whether they'd be up to the task //

out (in four days in September 1939, 400,000 animals were killed in London alone – a quarter of the pets in the capital); the rising tide of anti-Semitism in Germany as mobs attack Jewish businesses and Jews are murdered in the streets; declining living standards across the Reich (the shortage of coffee was particularly infuriating) as income per head remains only two-thirds that of Britain and half that of the United States; and the arrival of 70,000 Jewish refugees in Britain. Taylor provides insights into everyday hopes, fears and experiences in Britain and Germany from

a multiplicity of perspectives, with the incidents covered ranging from the tragic to the surreal.

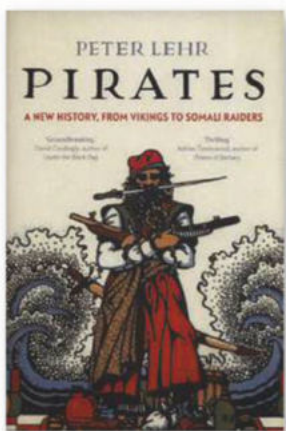
The book offers an entertaining excursion, but there are problems. It reads as a random assortment of distinctive (and brief) stories, and this constant darting around means it lacks a clear thread for the reader to follow. It also ends rather abruptly without a proper conclusion, which is a great shame, because the reader is left wondering what it all means. Taylor also mounts a clumsy political intervention, seeing 'chilling' parallels between the 1930s and the world of Brexit. He even hyperbolically suggests the presence of unnerving similarities in the 'national psyche' between contemporary Britain and Nazi Germany. The author's political fixations aside, however, this compendium of ground-level snapshots of Britain and Germany in the build-up to war is worth perusing. **H**

Robert Crowcroft's books include *The End Is Nigh: British Politics, Power and the Road to the Second World War* (OUP)



# A recipe for piracy

**CLAIRE JOWITT** sets out on a daring voyage through the history of pirates, which negotiates its global scope with skill



## **Pirates: A New History, from Vikings to Somali Raiders**

by Peter Lehr

Yale University Press,  
272 pages, £20

Penned by an expert in terrorism studies, this ambitious new

study offers “a global account of pirates and their modus operandi from the Middle Ages to the present day”. Wide-ranging in geography and chronology, it aims to survey the ingredients of the ‘recipe’ for piracy (an astute metaphor first coined by Gerard Mueller and Freda Adler in their 1985 book *Outlaws of the Ocean*), which have led to a ‘piracy cycle’ across time and space.

“Take a maritime geography, which favours local outlaws and disfavours distant law enforcers,” writes Lehr. “Add the chance of enormous profit and little risk. Mix it generously with strife, internal and external. Avoid maritime law enforcement capacity, and do not add common law! Corruption helps for spicing! Make it hot.”

The danger of following one universal recipe, of course, is that the book loses flavour and texture when analysing individual pirate ‘dishes’, ie specific contexts in which piracy occurs. Yet Lehr’s study succeeds in avoiding homogenisation, even as it ranges widely. We encounter Saracen pirates attacking the Abbasid and Fatimid Caliphates between 750 and 1258, the Victual Brothers and Likedeelers pillaging the medieval Hanseatic League, Elizabethan ‘seadogs’, Atlantic pirates in the so-called ‘Golden Age’, Chinese pirates, contemporary Somali pirates off the Banaadir coast, and Nigerian pirates active in the Gulf of Guinea, among many others.

The book is most compelling and most confidently told in its final part, ‘A Globalised World, 1914 to the Present’, which benefits from Lehr’s considerable research expertise in Somali piracy and contemporary international relations. Two earlier parts – ‘Distinct Regions, AD 700 to 1500’ and ‘The Rise of European Sea Power, 1500–1914’ – are heavily

reliant on a relatively small range of well-respected critical and contextual secondary sources rather than extensive and deep-diving primary research. Occasionally, mistakes creep in. Most prominent, perhaps, is the book’s uncontested acceptance that Daniel Defoe was the author of the seminal work in pirate mythography *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724) by Captain Charles Johnson, widely believed to be a pseudonym. “As Defoe has it,” says Lehr, quoting *General History*, “all the rest, much wounded, jump’d over-board, and called out for Quarters”. The identity of ‘Captain Charles Johnson’ is, however, an

## // We meet Chinese pirates, Somali pirates, Elizabethan seadogs and the Victual Brothers pillaging the Hanseatic League //

old chestnut of pirate studies, and subject of numerous inquiries and theories about possible candidates. To accept wholesale Defoe’s authorship without comment somewhat reduces the book’s authority to tell the “whole story” of piracy – to quote the flyleaf – in areas beyond the author’s research expertise.

Nonetheless, *Pirates* is an enjoyable read, written with energy and skill. It is a brave attempt to analyse the drivers of piracy through the ages, as well as policies and operations that reduce or combat its threat. The book’s breadth is both a strength and weakness: it is ‘new’ in aiming to understand the patterns of piracy across time and space but, in consequence, for this reader at least, Lehr’s focus on the ‘recipe’ at times denies us the full flavour of the ‘dish’. **H**

.....  
**Claire Jowitt** is professor of early modern studies at the University of East Anglia and author of *The Culture of Piracy, 1580–1630: English Literature and Seaborne Crime* (Routledge)

## **Michael Wood** on the stirring tale of a secret history club in the Warsaw Ghetto



## **Who Will Write Our History?**

by Samuel D Kassow  
(Penguin, 2009)

As Churchill said, the Holocaust was “the greatest crime ever committed in the history of the world”, and it has generated some of the most extraordinary pieces of historical writing of our time. One is Samuel D Kassow’s *Who Will Write Our History?* It’s the tale of the historian Emanuel Ringelblum who, during the German occupation of Warsaw, gathered a clandestine group to record the history of Jewish life in Poland, to pass it on to posterity. This is the history of ordinary people written by ordinary people, in the belief that the truth of their lives was worth handing on.

Of more than 60 members of the ‘History Club’, only three survived, but two of the containers of documents they buried were recovered after the war, revealing an incredible story of human courage. Nineteen-year-old David Graber, who helped to bury the archive at the beginning of August 1942, at the height of the horrors of the Warsaw Ghetto, scribbled a last will that was found with the archive: “What we were unable to cry and shriek out to the world we buried in the ground... I would love to see the moment in which this great treasure will be dug up and scream the truth at the world. So the world may know all... May the treasure fall into good hands, may it last into better times, may it alarm and alert the world to what happened in the 20th century. We may now die in peace. We fulfilled our mission. May history attest for us.” If you want to understand why history matters, read this book. **H**

.....  
**Michael Wood** is professor of public history at the University of Manchester



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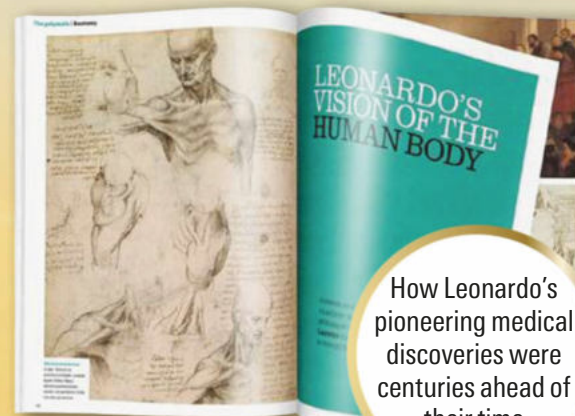
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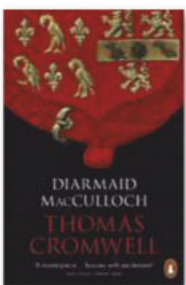
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RELIGION

**Thomas Cromwell: A Life**  
by Diarmaid MacCulloch  
(Penguin, 752 pages, £12.99)  
**NOW IN PAPERBACK**

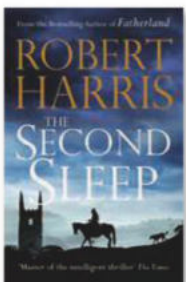


Self-made man

Born the son of a blacksmith, Thomas Cromwell weaved his way up the social ladder to become Henry VIII's right-hand man. The meteoric rise of this indomitable self-starter is one of the most intriguing tales of the Tudor era. In what Hilary Mantel has called the "biography we have been awaiting for 400 years", MacCulloch reassesses Cromwell's life, and his role in events that altered the course of English history.

FICTION

**The Second Sleep**  
by Robert Harris  
(Cornerstone, 336 pages, £20)

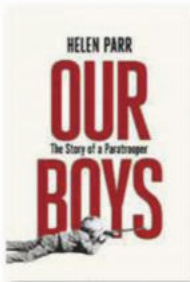


Medieval mystery

From Nazi Germany to ancient Rome, blockbuster novelist Robert Harris has crafted pacy, crowd-pleasing thrillers in a variety of historical settings during his career. Now he turns his eye to an ominously isolated village in medieval Exmoor. When young parson Christopher Fairfax arrives to take up a post in the local church, he begins to unearth a mystery surrounding the death of his predecessor.

FAMILY HISTORY

**Our Boys: The Story of a Paratrooper**  
by Helen Parr  
(Penguin, 416 pages, £10.99)  
**NOW IN PAPERBACK**

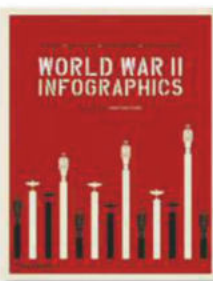


Of men and war

Helen Parr's uncle Dave was a 19-year-old paratrooper when he was killed during the Falklands War in 1982. In *Our Boys* – now released in paperback after receiving a clutch of awards and glowing reviews last year – Parr uses her uncle's story to reflect on the lasting impact of the short conflict. In the process, she also provides a revealing take on Britain's complex feelings about masculinity and armed service.

VISUAL

**World War II: Infographics**  
by Jean Lopez, Vincent Bernard, Nicolas Aubin, Nicholas Guillerat  
(Thames & Hudson, 192 pages, £29.95)

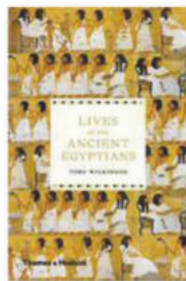


Big data

The sheer scale of the Second World War can be hard to get your head around. This innovative new book distils some of the conflict's mind-boggling statistics down into easily understandable visuals. Its pages are crammed with a treasure trove of intricate graphs and diagrams to pore over, from a pie-chart counting U-boats in the battle of the Atlantic to a map portraying civilian casualties per nation.

ANCIENT WORLD

**Lives of the Ancient Egyptians**  
by Toby Wilkinson  
(Thames & Hudson, 288 pages, £16.99)  
**NOW IN PAPERBACK**



Beyond pharaohs and pyramids

Featuring a hundred short biographies of ancient Egypt's 'ordinary' people, this paperback reissue fills its pacy structure with a surprising amount of material. Some of this is through necessity – as the introduction notes, this was a 3,000-year civilisation that spanned a vast area – but it's also testament to Toby Wilkinson's skill as a storyteller. A great introduction to a fascinating period of history.

SOVIET UNION

**Last Witnesses: Unchildlike Stories**  
by Svetlana Alexievich  
(Penguin, 320 pages, £12.99)

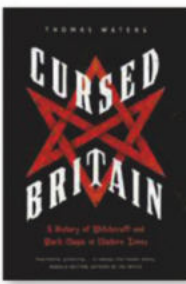


Words of war

The seemingly strange subtitle of this book, first published in 1985 and now available in English, is a perfect indicator of its contents: the reminiscences of Soviet people who, as children, witnessed the horrors of the Second World War. Their stories are equal parts revealing and relentless, offering harrowing insights into the human cost of a world shaped by death, division and destruction.

CULTURAL

**Cursed Britain: A History of Witchcraft and Black Magic in Modern Times**  
by Thomas Waters  
(Yale, 352 pages, £25)

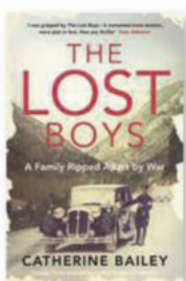


A history of hexcraft

Magic and witchcraft remain, in the popular imagination, firmly rooted in the medieval world. This enthralling book updates the story, charting the ways in which curses and hexes have remained powerful cultural ideas around the British empire until the present day. From the 'cunning folk' of the Victorian era to the reflowering of witchcraft in the 21st century, this is a detailed, wide-ranging study.

WW2

**The Lost Boys: A Family Ripped Apart by War**  
by Catherine Bailey  
(Viking, 480 pages, £20)



Resistance and revenge

On 20 July 1944, resistance groups attempted to assassinate Hitler in his woodland HQ. They failed. The repercussions of their failure were felt not only by the plotters, many of whom were executed, but their families, who were arrested and separated. Such a separation haunts this biography, which chronicles Fey von Hassell's efforts to track down her sons who were forcibly removed by the Nazis. **H**



# ENCOUNTERS

**82 DIARY: LISTEN / WATCH / VISIT**

By Jon Bauckham and Jonathan Wright

**88 EXPLORE... Dover Castle**

**90 TRAVEL TO... Seoul**

## WATCH

### Warnings from history

How did Germany come to be under the control of Hitler and his fascists? As a new series from the makers of *Elizabeth I's Secret Agents* explores, the ascent of the Nazis was by no means inevitable. The Weimar Republic had a vibrant democratic culture, but its political culture was subject to huge pressures, notably during the hyperinflation era (1921–23) and at the onset of the Great Depression after the Wall Street Crash.

The Nazis exploited these kinds of economic shocks and, offering multiple perspectives from leading historians, the series considers the motivations of those who led the party and enacted its programme. Just as importantly, the series also shows us those who tried to stop Hitler, often at great personal risk.

Focusing in detail on key events such as the political machinations that followed the 1930 German election, and the Night of the Long Knives, when Hitler brutally consolidated his hold on power, the documentaries highlight where chances to stop the Nazis were missed. (Look out for an article on the Nazis' path to power in our next issue.)

#### The Rise of the Nazis

Expected to air on 2 September / BBC Two







**On the path  
to power**

Franz Pfeffer von Salomon, Joseph Goebbels and Adolf Hitler (L-R) salute crowds in Berlin shortly after the 1930 German federal election. The Nazi Party won a total of 107 seats, making it the second largest party in the Reichstag





*The Country Girls* paints a picture of life in 1950s rural Ireland

## LISTEN

# Sexism and censorship

In the mid-century years following the Second World War, rural Ireland was a deeply conservative place. And, as novelist Edna O'Brien's *Country Girls* trilogy vividly explored, as it traced the friendship between childhood friends Cait and Baba, it was a place where women's freedoms were often severely curtailed.

Broadcast in three tranches and over 25 episodes, BBC Radio 4's new adaptation stars Charlie Murphy (*Peaky Blinders*) and Aoibhinn McGinnity (*Love/Hate*). A measure of the controversy the first book caused is that it was actually banned by Ireland's censors.

## The Country Girls

Scheduled for 19 August / BBC Radio 4



## VISIT

# Wirral's legacy

**While Liverpool is well known for its maritime history, a great tradition of shipbuilding still exists on the other side of the Mersey. A free exhibition traces the history of six ships constructed in the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead, including the iron vessel that took the explorer David Livingstone on his voyages, as well as the luxurious RMS *Mauretania*, launched in 1938.**

## Six Vessels

Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead /  
Until 29 September / Free entry  
[williamsonartgallery.org/whats-on](http://williamsonartgallery.org/whats-on)

## LISTEN

# The price of war

One of the key lessons of the First World War was that, in an era of mechanised conflict, nations needed to be able to mobilise their economies as well as their peoples. How well did the authorities in Britain, Germany, France, the USSR, China and Japan heed this lesson?

It's a question explored over five episodes by economist Duncan Weldon, who considers re-armament in the 1930s (as shown in the image, below, of a battleship being launched in 1939), and how financial and industrial factors helped shape the different military strategies adopted by the nations.

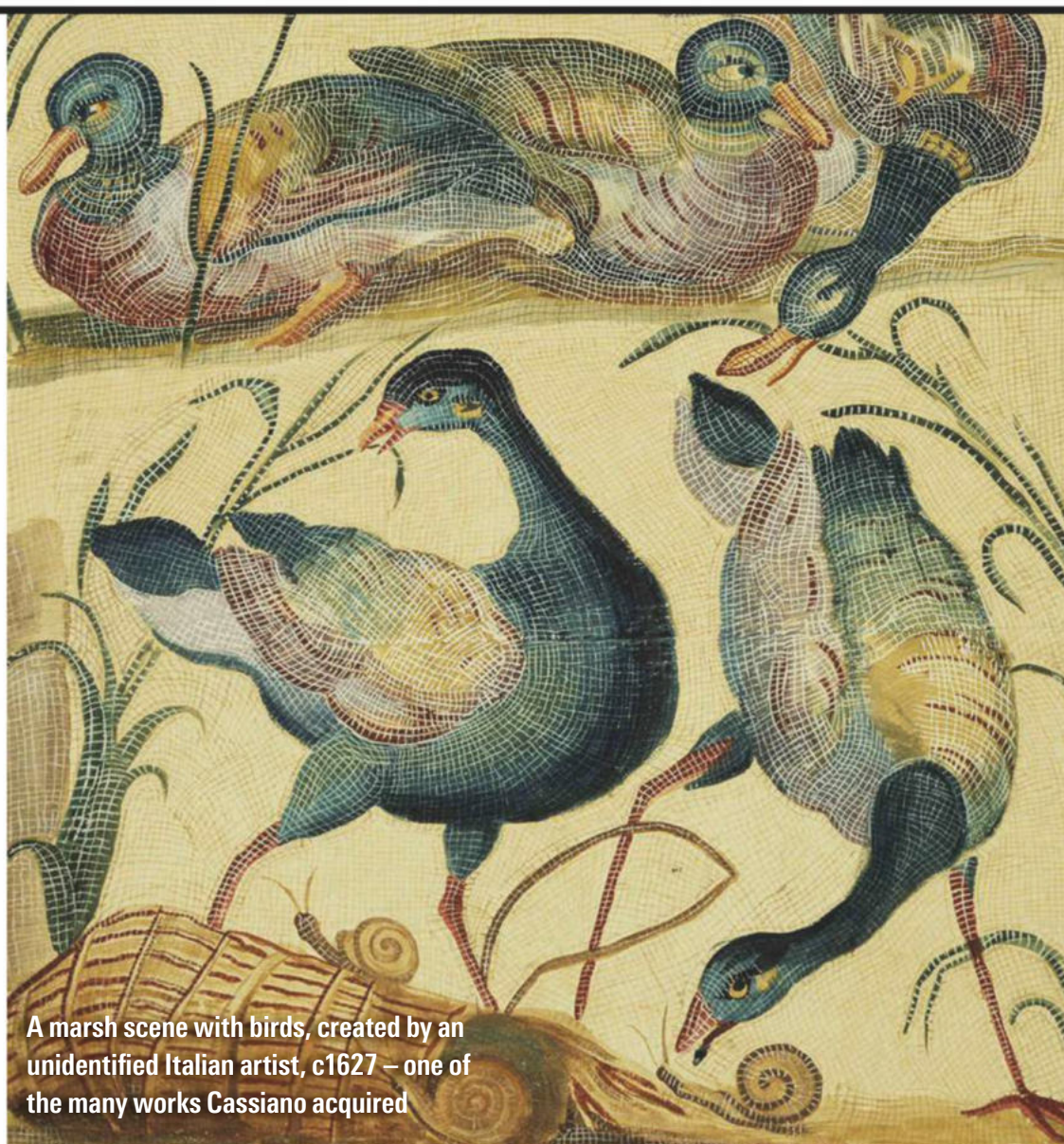


## World War Two: The Economic Battle

Scheduled for 19 August  
/ BBC Radio 4

## WEEKLY TV & RADIO

Visit [historyextra.com](http://historyextra.com) for weekly updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes



A marsh scene with birds, created by an unidentified Italian artist, c1627 – one of the many works Cassiano acquired

## VISIT

# Art meets science

Renaissance Italy was home to a number of wealthy patrons who amassed huge art collections during their lifetimes. Lorenzo de' Medici is perhaps the most famous example, but also included within this bracket are later figures, such as Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588–1657), a Roman antiquarian who spent years assembling what he called his 'Paper Museum' – a collection of 10,000 drawings, watercolours and prints touching on an array of scientific topics.

Much like the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, many of these works ended up in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, where they have remained ever since.

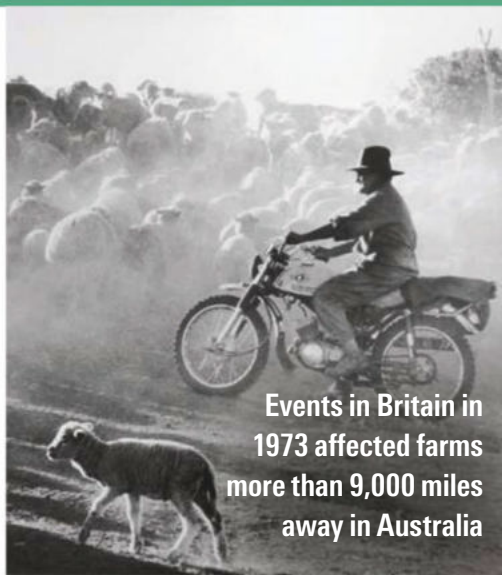
An exhibition curated by postgraduate students at the University of Birmingham brings together a selection of Cassiano's most interesting acquisitions, covering subjects as diverse as architecture, zoology, botany and cartography.

To put the works in context, the exhibition also features rare books and geological specimens from the university's Cadbury Research Library and Lapworth Museum.

## The Paper Museum: The Curious Eye of Cassiano dal Pozzo

Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham / Until 1 September 2019 /  
[barber.org.uk/exhibitions](http://barber.org.uk/exhibitions)





Events in Britain in 1973 affected farms more than 9,000 miles away in Australia

## LISTEN

### Views from afar

With Britain once again approaching a much-delayed exit from the European Union, the return of *As Others See Us* seems especially opportune. The show finds Neil MacGregor, the former director of the British Museum who now heads the Humboldt Forum in Berlin, exploring how people in other countries perceive the UK.

The series often throws up events overlooked at home, such as those in Australia in 1973, when, as ex-governor-general Dame Quentin Bryce recalls, the nation's agriculture took a hit after Britain joined the Common Market.

#### As Others See Us

Scheduled for 2 September / BBC Radio 4

# HISTORY ON THE AIRWAVES

"In his later years he gave millions to promote peace and disarmament, but education was his passion"



Ex-prime minister and UN special envoy for global education **GORDON BROWN** tells us about the industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919), the subject of his new BBC Radio 4 documentary

#### How much did Carnegie give away?

It's believed that, during his lifetime, Carnegie gave away more than 90 per cent of his fortune – an estimated \$380m he had accumulated as the world's biggest steel maker. No one comes near to him for giving. In today's money that's \$300bn, much more than what the current largest donors Bill and Melinda Gates have to give away. And why? His article 'Gospel of Wealth' said that to die rich was to die disgraced.

#### Where did he target his money?

Carnegie gave money worldwide to science and music – almost mischievously for church organs so they could brighten up what he considered to be very dull religious services. In his later years he gave millions to promote peace and disarmament, but education was his passion.

My father was the first in our family to go to university. Coming from a family where in the depression of the 1930s his father had only seasonal employment as a farm worker, university was possible only because of a Carnegie scholarship.

#### Why did he focus on education?

To help people help themselves. Charity was for self-improvement, so that by their own efforts, young people could pursue better lives. He was an egalitarian and always resented those who said that young workers should not be entitled to books to acquire the knowledge to improve.

But he could also be accused of being authoritarian. He thought he knew best, as he said to his workers who went on a strike for higher wages that ended in violence and deaths: "If I had raised your wages, you would have spent that money by buying a better cut of meat or more drink for your dinner. But what you needed, though you didn't

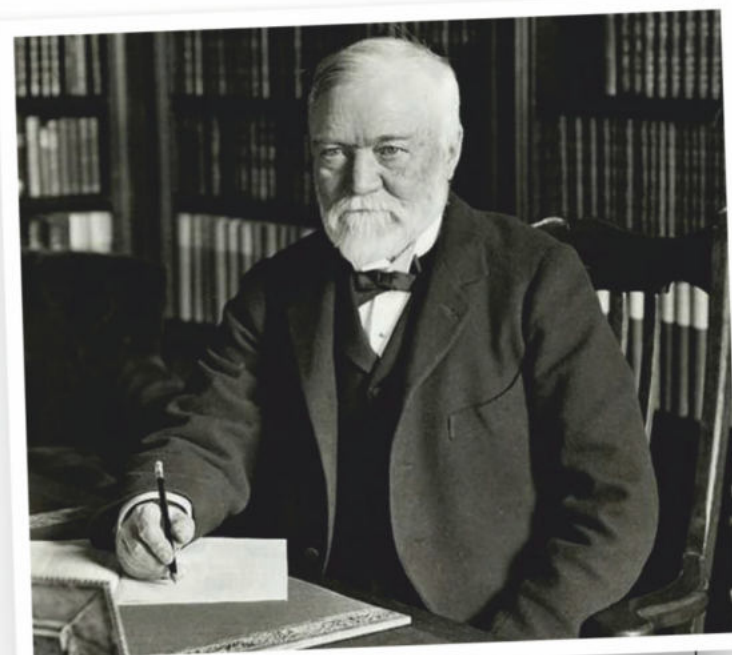
know it, was my libraries and concert halls. And that's what I'm giving to you."

#### Many of today's philanthropists target other areas. Why is this?

Endowing your local university is still popular, but even when there are 260 million children out of school and 800 million (half the developing world's children) who will never achieve school qualifications, global education lacks the immediacy and in-your-face drama that lifesaving donations for surgery and treatments bring.

The cause of universal education may now be taken for granted, almost old hat, in a way that it was not in previous generations. There are signs that things are beginning to change, but the cause Carnegie stood for needs reinvigorating. **H**

Gordon Brown's documentary about Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth*, will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on the centenary of Carnegie's death: Sunday 11 August, at 1.30pm



Born in Dunfermline, Andrew Carnegie emigrated to the US and made his fortune in the steel industry

NORWICH CASTLE AND ART GALLERIES/GETTY IMAGES

## VISIT

Until 8 September 2019  
Viking: Rediscover the Legend

LAST  
CHANCE  
TO SEE

Don't miss your chance to visit this major exhibition in Norwich, exploring how Viking culture transformed life in the British Isles. Artefacts on display include coins, weapons and jewellery, such as a bone plate brooch (right).

Norwich Castle  
Museum & Art  
Gallery / museums.  
norfolk.gov.uk





# HISTORY COOKBOOK



We decorated our cake with chocolate icing and hazelnuts when testing Eleanor's recipe

## TASTE

### FDR's birthday cake

Few US First Ladies have managed to garner the same levels of public adoration as Eleanor Roosevelt. A celebrated diplomat and human rights activist, she accompanied Franklin D Roosevelt throughout all four of his terms in office.

But despite her achievements, Eleanor was, according to Ernest Hemingway (who once joined the Roosevelts for dinner), responsible for some of the "worst food he'd ever eaten". Thankfully, this birthday cake recipe she devised for her husband appears to be an exception: a rich, robust treat.

**Difficulty:** 3/10 **Time:** 1 hour

## INGREDIENTS

225g butter  
190g sugar  
3 eggs, well beaten  
240ml cold black coffee  
260g flour  
65g cocoa powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract  
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
1 tbsp white vinegar

## METHOD

Preheat the oven to 175°C and cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl, adding eggs one at a time. In a separate bowl, sift the flour, salt, bicarbonate of soda and cocoa, removing any lumps.

Add the coffee to the butter mixture and combine with the flour mixture bit by bit, before stirring in the vinegar and vanilla. Bake for 35–40 minutes in a 9-inch round cake tin and decorate with icing of your choice once cooled.

*Recipe from cheaprecipeblog.com*

## WATCH

### Personal histories

To call any series by Stephen Poliakoff a historical drama is of course misleading in that he's a writer-director whose work, whenever it's set, occupies its own universe. This is a heavily stylised place of clipped dialogue, surface gloss and nothing ever being quite as it seems.

Yet it's also a place where the past, in particular the way personal histories shape people's lives, is constantly to the fore. That's especially true with *Summer of Rockets*, a drama – now available on DVD – that utilises details from Poliakoff's family to add depth to a Cold War tale of espionage. One example of this is that Poliakoff's Russian émigré father developed a pager (with Poliakoff's grandfather) and serviced Churchill's hearing aids, as spendthrift Samuel Petrukhin (Toby Stephens) does in the drama.

But the story's emotional heart is what it is to be an outsider trying to find a place in British society – or, arguably worse, an insider who needs to escape.

### Summer of Rockets

BBC DVD / Cert: 15 / £14.99



*Summer of Rockets* sees Kathleen Shaw (Keeley Hawes) and Samuel Petrukhin (Toby Stephens) caught up in a Cold War conundrum

## VISIT

### Listening in

From the high-octane drama of the *James Bond* canon to films about the real-life heroics of Alan Turing, the public's fascination with espionage shows no signs of abating.

It's perhaps fitting, then, that GCHQ has decided to mark its 100th anniversary by hosting a free exhibition at the Science Museum, exploring the history of British codebreaking and intelligence-gathering from the Crimean War through to the present day.

As well as the chance to browse through recently declassified government files, visitors will also be able to view a number of important cipher devices, including a world-famous Enigma Machine and a lesser-known 5-UCO – a tool once considered so secret that all examples were thought to have been destroyed.

Elsewhere, the exhibition addresses the challenges of working for GCHQ in the modern era, and the ways in which the latest computer technology is used to prevent terror attacks and serious crime.

### Top Secret: From Ciphers to Cyber Security

Science Museum, London / Until 23 February 2020 /

Free entry

[sciencemuseum.org.uk/see-and-do/top-secret](http://sciencemuseum.org.uk/see-and-do/top-secret)

A Kryha cipher machine – one of several codebreaking devices on display







Jim Moir (aka Vic Reeves) will preside over an experiment to recreate the ethos of the Bauhaus

## WATCH

# Designs for life

It's a century since architect Walter Gropius founded the Staatliches Bauhaus (1919–33), the influential German art school that combined fine arts and crafts.

One man who is fascinated by the Bauhaus is Jim Moir, better known as Vic Reeves. For *Bauhaus Rules*, he joins recent graduates from Central Saint Martins in London as they take part in an

immersive experiment to live and work by Bauhaus principles.

The show is part of a wider season on BBC Four that also includes *Anni Albers: A Life in Thread*, which tells the story of the Bauhaus-educated artist and printmaker who fled to the US with the rise of the Nazis, and *Bauhaus 100*, which looks at the pioneers of the movement and their desire to change the world around us.

## Bauhaus Rules

Expected to air in August / BBC Four

## VISIT

# Doors open

Although September may be associated with the end of the summer, it's an ideal month to venture outdoors and explore some of the UK's historic landmarks.

For those in England, hundreds of museums, galleries and attractions will be opening their doors free of charge as part of the annual **Heritage Open Days** festival ([heritageopendays.org.uk](http://heritageopendays.org.uk)) – running from 13–22 September – which marks its 25th anniversary in 2019.

Visitors to participating venues will be able to enjoy talks and events on the theme of 'People Power', including a musical retelling of the Swing Riots at Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester (21 September), and a talk at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford about the Women's Land Army (19 September).

It's also a landmark year for Scotland's **Doors Open Days** festival, which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary on weekends throughout September ([doorsopendays.org.uk](http://doorsopendays.org.uk)). Meanwhile, the Welsh government is to offer free access to more than 25 sites as it hosts its annual **Open Doors** programme ([cadw.gov.wales](http://cadw.gov.wales)).

Finally, history lovers in Northern Ireland will have the opportunity to explore 300 properties across the weekend of 14–15 September as part of the nation's contribution to the wider **European Heritage Open Days** initiative ([discovernorth-ernireland.com](http://discovernorth-ernireland.com)). **H**



The Heritage Open Days programme features an array of family-friendly activities



## EXPLORE... DOVER CASTLE

# Britain's first line of defence

For 2,000 years Dover has played host to military fortifications, from Iron Age earthworks to William the Conqueror's wooden castle to Cold War bunkers. **JULIAN HUMPHRYS** penetrates a historic hilltop stronghold

**D**over is one of Britain's greatest castles. Its cliff-top location, overlooking the shortest crossing between England and France, has given it an immense strategic importance, and as a result its defences have been rebuilt and adapted over the centuries to meet the changing needs of warfare. Spend a day there and you'll discover 2,000 years of military building, from Iron Age earthworks to Cold War tunnels.

The importance of the site wasn't lost on the Romans, and the lighthouse they built on the heights to guide their ships into the harbour below still stands within the castle walls. It's the most complete standing Roman building in England. The upper part dates from the 13th century, when it served as a bell tower for the adjacent Anglo-Saxon church. The church was heavily restored in Victorian times but some Saxon features remain, notably the now-blocked south door.

Although William the Conqueror built a wooden castle at Dover, the first major construction in stone dates from the reign of Henry II, who spent a vast amount of money building the curtain walls and the huge Great Tower. Clearly this monumental 25 metre high structure could have been used as a place of refuge in the event of attack but it was also a statement of royal power, a comfortable lodging and an impressive place in which to entertain. English Heritage has recreated the lavish interiors and brightly coloured decorations that would have greeted visitors at the time. Other buildings did have a purely military purpose – the remarkable Avranches Tower on the eastern battlements was

constructed in the 1180s to cover a relatively weak spot in the castle perimeter, and features over 50 crossbow loops in two tiers.

These defences would soon be put to the test. When King John (who also spent money on the castle) reneged on Magna Carta, many of his barons rebelled and invited Prince Louis of France to replace him. But Dover remained loyal to John and successfully held out against Louis, even though the French succeeded in undermining the castle's main gatehouse. After the siege it was blocked and replaced by the Constable's Gate, now the castle's main entrance. Note how the approach to this runs parallel to the main defences, exposing an attacker to flanking fire from the castle walls. Meanwhile additional defences were built outside the old gate, linked to the main castle by a tunnel you can still explore.

When troops were massed here to guard against the threat of a French invasion at the end of the 18th century, further tunnels were dug to serve as barracks. These tunnels were used again during the Second World War to house a hospital and it was also from here that Vice-Admiral Ramsay organised Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk in 1940. During the Cold War, the tunnels were secretly converted into a regional seat of government, tasked with the unenviable job of organising life in the event of a nuclear attack. You can visit the tunnels by joining one of the regular guided tours. One takes you into the underground hospital, which has been faithfully recreated, while the other tells the story of Dunkirk through special effects and film, and incorporates visits to wartime operations rooms and a telephone exchange. **H**

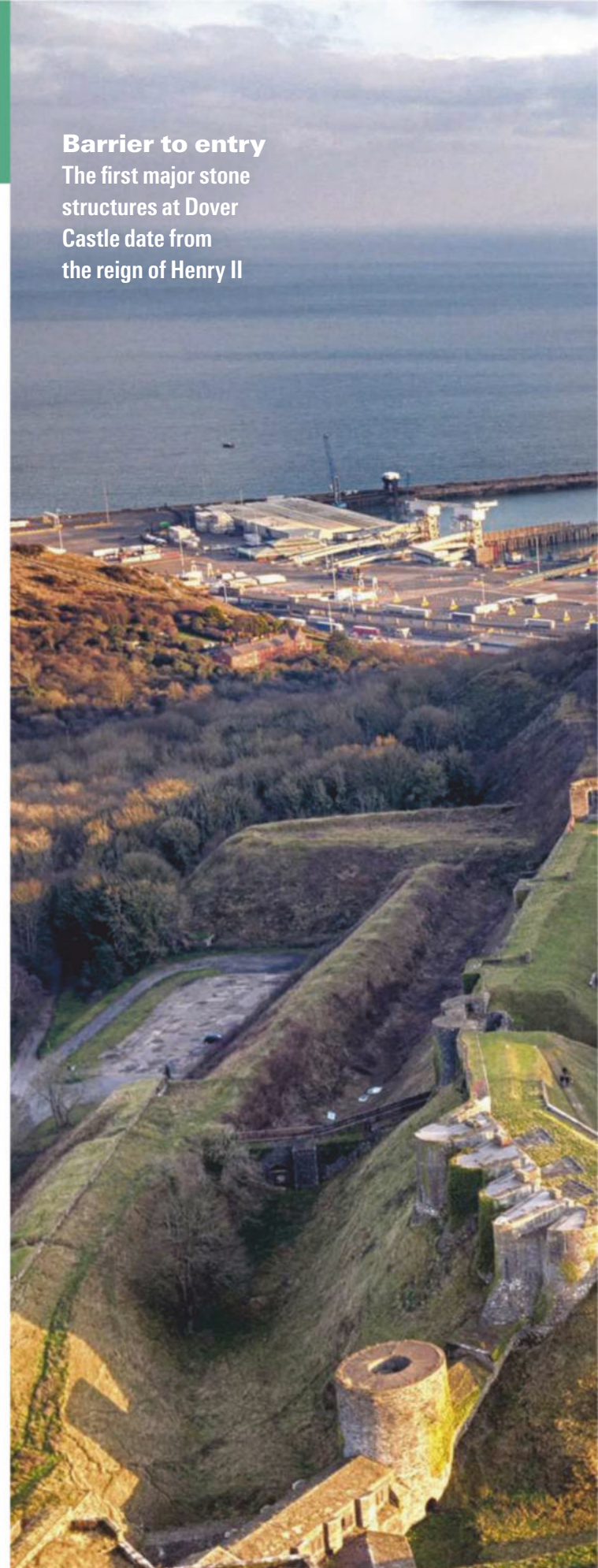
**// When the barons rebelled, Dover remained loyal to King John and held out against the French //**

**Julian Humphrys** is a historian and author specialising in battlefields. His books include *Enemies at the Gate* (English Heritage, 2007)

**VISIT** For more information head to [english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle](http://english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle)

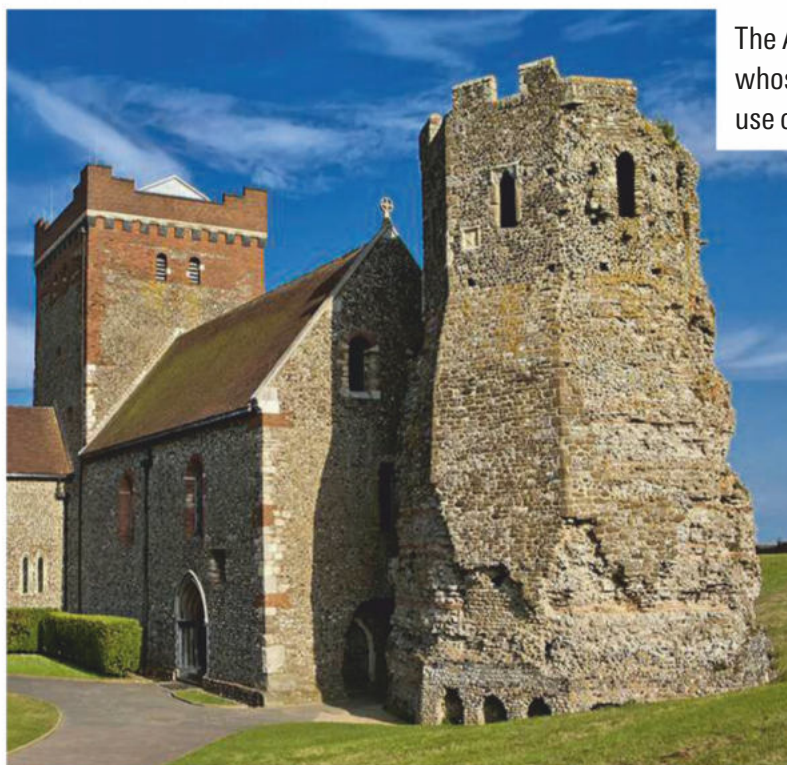
## Barrier to entry

The first major stone structures at Dover  
Castle date from  
the reign of Henry II



CHRIS GORMAN-PICFAIR/LAMY/GETTY/DREAMTIME





The Anglo-Saxon church, whose bell tower makes use of a Roman lighthouse

ABOVE: A Second World War repeater station – which boosted long-distance telephone messages – in the tunnels at Dover Castle  
LEFT: Henry II's lavish interiors have been recreated in the Great Tower

#### MORE FROM US

For more content on military threats to Britain, go to [historyextra.com/topic/military-history](https://historyextra.com/topic/military-history)



While its heritage was damaged by war, careful preservation has left a cluster of unforgettable sites







## TRAVEL TO... SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

# A modern metropolis rising from ruins

Seoul is undoubtedly an energetic emblem of the modern Asia, but it's also a fascinating place to dive into the history of the Korean peninsula. The city centre continues to develop at a fierce rate, with high-rises and a rejuvenated riverside park that can be explored alongside designated national treasures and more workaday delights like the bustling Gwangjang Market. Spend an evening here to find every type of Korean street food and rub shoulders with locals enjoying some downtime.

With its heritage damaged in the early 20th century by both occupation and war, more recent reconstruction and preservation of undamaged buildings has left a cluster of historic palaces to visit, of which Changdeokgung is arguably the pick. A moonlit tour is an unforgettable way to experience it.

As you'd expect, some of Korea's best museums are found in Seoul, including the National Museum, and Seoul Museum of History. For a taste of old Seoul, though, head to Bukchon Hanok Village – a preserved but still-vibrant community of 900 traditional homes set amid characterful alleyways. You'll have plenty of other visitors for company, but it's a fine place for a wander and a change of pace from much of the rest of the capital.

The border with North Korea lies just over 30 miles from Seoul, and a tour towards the frontier makes for an extraordinary day-trip. While you can visit various areas of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) on a tour, most visitors have in mind the heavily organised outing to the Joint Security Area (JSA), which must be booked in advance, and for which you'll need ID and to observe a dress code. It's worth the effort – it's not every day that you get a chance to peer into North Korea. **H**

### IF YOU LIKE THIS...

- The appeal of **Shanghai** lies in its mix of bustling Chinese mega-city, international history and rapid present-day growth.
- **Taiwan** is another fast-changing Asian destination with a thrilling contrast between the old and the new.

### Seoul survivor

The Unesco World Heritage-listed Changdeokgung Palace in South Korea's capital

By **Tom Hall**, travel writer and author of *Lonely Planet's Best Ever Travel Tips*



# Castle HOTELS

With so much history to choose from, it's a great time to get out there and visit the country's castles. Discover historic hotels and spend your holiday conquering some of these fascinating fortresses.



## Langley Castle Hotel

Langley Castle has stood proudly in the Northumbrian landscape since 1350. Guests can enjoy a luxurious stay in the 4-star castle, which also boasts a 2AA Rosette restaurant. Langley offers a variety of accommodation, from atmospheric bedrooms within the castle, to relaxed and contemporary rooms in Castle View which are situated in the 10-acre grounds.

[langleycastle.co.uk](http://langleycastle.co.uk) // 01434 688 888



## Hever Castle

Once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, Hever Castle Bed and Breakfast offers 28 'five-star' bedrooms in the Edwardian wings of the Castle, the Astor Wing and the Anne Boleyn Wing. Designed in Tudor style offering traditional features combined with modern day luxuries, a stay includes breakfast and complimentary access to the Castle and gardens.

[hevercastle.co.uk](http://hevercastle.co.uk) // 01732 861 800 // [stay@hevercastle.co.uk](mailto:stay@hevercastle.co.uk)



## The Atholl Palace

The Atholl Palace Hotel is situated in Pitlochry and opened in 1878. Guests can expect to enjoy 48 acres of land, maintained gardens, four tennis courts, a pitch n putt, a play park for children, a relaxing lounge area and our beautiful Lavender Spa. We are renowned for our fairytale weddings.

[athollpalace.com](http://athollpalace.com) // 01796 472400



## Château Rhianfa

The picturesque Welsh countryside provides a stunning backdrop for this fairy-tale style chateau on the Isle of Anglesey. Built-in 1849, the hotel is a grade II-listed building and draws on its historic surroundings to offer guests a beautiful stay. Room options include cosy lodges overlooking the Menai Strait and spacious and elegant suites with French-inspired décor.

[chateaurhianfa.com](http://chateaurhianfa.com) // 01248 880090



## Sudeley Castle & Gardens

Located in the heart of the Cotswolds, Sudeley Castle & Gardens is a must-see on any visit to the area. The castle has played an important role in England's history, boasting royal connections that stretch back over 1,000 years. Visitors can walk in the footsteps of past kings and queens including Richard III, Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and Lady Jane Grey. It is also the only private castle in England to have a queen buried within its grounds - Katherine Parr, the last of Henry VIII's six wives. Today visitors can explore the beautiful restored 15th century church where she lies entombed.

The Castle has sixteen charming Cotswold cottages available to hire and guests staying in the cottages will received free access to Sudeley Castle & Gardens during their stay.

Sudeley Castle & Gardens, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, GL54 5JD.

[sudeleycastle.co.uk](http://sudeleycastle.co.uk) // 01242 604244



# UNDISCOVERED *Museums*

Explore the fascinating collections and displays available throughout the UK in this selection of museums that you may not have yet discovered.



## BROADWAY MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

A vibrant part of the Broadway scene, showcasing one of England's first purpose built coaching inns (1659), travel and trade, galleries devoted to the Broadway Colony of artists and writers, and the virtuoso micro-sculptures of artist Willard Wigan. This summer's special exhibition - Painting Faces: The Art of Flattery, curated by the Ashmolean Museum is beautiful and fun.

[broadwaymuseum.org.uk](http://broadwaymuseum.org.uk) | 01386 859047



## FRASERBURGH HERITAGE CENTRE

A four-star visitor attraction; experience 400 years of heritage first hand! Hands-on activities for all ages, gift shop, free parking, wheelchair access and loan, free audio tours. Out-of-hours school & group visits are welcome, but pre-booking is essential. Open April to October. For opening hours, see website. Find us on Facebook and TripAdvisor.

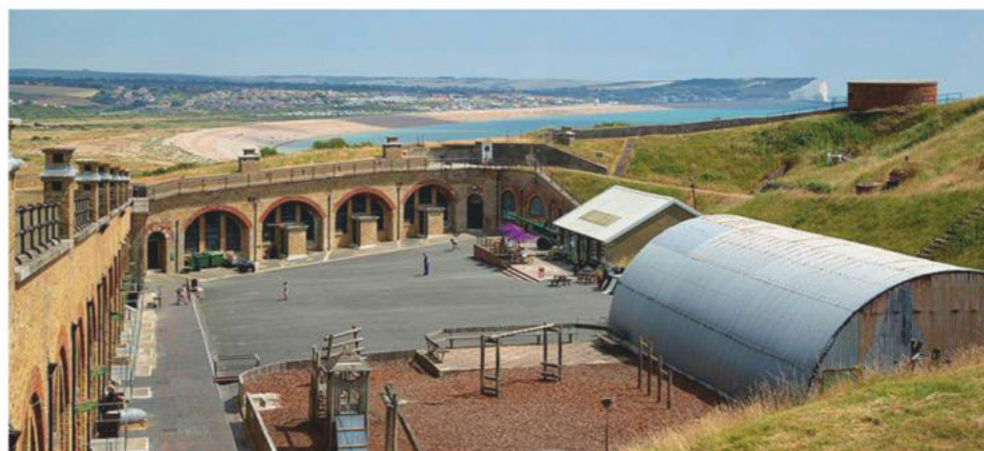
01346 512 888 | [fraserburghheritage.com](http://fraserburghheritage.com)



## AIR TRANSPORT AUXILIARY MUSEUM AT MAIDENHEAD HERITAGE CENTRE

'Grandma Flew Spitfires' exhibition, ATA research archive and Spitfire Simulator. Open Tues-Sat, 10am – 4pm. Maidenhead Heritage Centre, 18 Park Street, Maidenhead, SL6 1SL. Please pre-book to ensure a Spitfire Simulator flight, email [admin@maidenheadheritage.org.uk](mailto:admin@maidenheadheritage.org.uk).

01628 780555 | [atamuseum.org](http://atamuseum.org) | [maidenheadheritage.org.uk](http://maidenheadheritage.org.uk)



## NEWHAVEN FORT

Built into the chalk cliffs and fortified almost 150 years ago, Newhaven Fort has a long and rich history. Protected by its impressive ramparts, today it houses interactive exhibitions, intriguing caponiers and a vintage tearoom. Visit Newhaven Fort, take in the stunning views and lose yourself in history.

01273 517622 | [newhavenfort.org.uk](http://newhavenfort.org.uk) | [fortinfo@waveleisure.co.uk](mailto:fortinfo@waveleisure.co.uk)



## WEALD & DOWNLAND LIVING MUSEUM

Join us over the summer Season as we have many exciting and engaging events for all the family. Including Wonderful Wednesdays throughout August, Saddles to Steam – Horse Power to Horse Power and Historic Life Weekends. Visit our Outdoor Theatre, Open Air Cinema and much more. Make sure you add us to your 2019 Summer bucket list.

01243 811363 | [wealddown.co.uk](http://wealddown.co.uk) | [office@wealddown.co.uk](mailto:office@wealddown.co.uk)



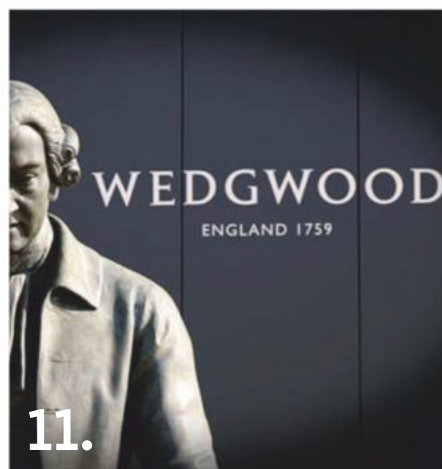
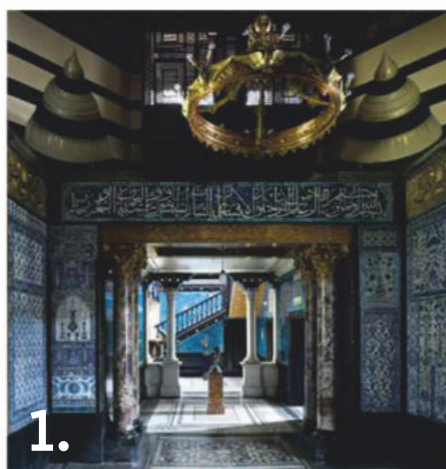
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Step inside the home of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford and immerse yourself in nearly 500 years of family stories and British history. Discover a unique art collection including an unrivalled group of 16th and 17th century portraits, a treasury of porcelain and fine English and French furniture.

01525 290 333 | [woburnabbey.co.uk](http://woburnabbey.co.uk)



# Autumn Heritage Collection



## 1. LEIGHTON HOUSE MUSEUM

Leighton House Museum is the former studio-house of Victorian artist Frederic Leighton, featuring the magnificent Arab Hall and its extraordinary display of Islamic tiles and handcrafted mosaics. Also not to be missed is Leighton's grand studio.  
[leightonhouse.co.uk](http://leightonhouse.co.uk) | [museums@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:museums@rbkc.gov.uk)

## 2. NATIONAL WATERFRONT MUSEUM

Right on the dock in Swansea's marina, the National Waterfront Museum tells the human story of 300 years of Welsh industry and innovation. Free entry. Oystermouth Road, Maritime Quarter, Swansea, SA1 3RD.  
[museum.wales/swansea](http://museum.wales/swansea) | 0300 111 2333

## 3. BUTSER ANCIENT FARM

A unique experimental archaeological site in the beautiful South Downs. Step inside reconstructed buildings from the Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon periods and learn traditional skills with year-round workshops and events.  
[butserancientfarm.co.uk](http://butserancientfarm.co.uk) | 02392 598838

## 4. DERBY MUSEUMS

Visit our beautiful World Collections gallery, featuring over 1400 objects. Co-produced with thousands of people, this vibrant space is designed to encourage interesting encounters and new perspectives.  
[derbymuseums.org](http://derbymuseums.org) | 01332 641 901

## 5. FROGMORE MILL, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

Learn about the history of paper, make your own sheet, see a working 1902 paper machine and much more at the world's oldest mechanised paper mill.

[thepapertrail.org.uk](http://thepapertrail.org.uk) | 01442 234600

## 6. WORLD OF JAMES HERRIOT

The World of James Herriot will take you on a spectacular journey through Herriot's fully restored 1940s home and veterinary surgery in Thirsk, travelling back in time to allow visitors to find out more about the thrilling past of the world-famous vet and author.  
[worldofjamesherriot.com](http://worldofjamesherriot.com)

## 7. ANAESTHESIA HERITAGE CENTRE

A unique medical science museum devoted to the history of anaesthesia, resuscitation and pain relief. The new exhibition "Doctor says relax" explores the history of muscle relaxants: from Amazonian arrow poison to life-saving drugs.  
[anaesthetists.org/Home/Heritage-centre](http://anaesthetists.org/Home/Heritage-centre)

## 8. THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM

Discover the fascinating history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity. Learn about the lives of the children who grew up there and see the poignant tokens, alongside inspiring art.  
[foundlingmuseum.org.uk](http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk) | 020 7841 3600

## 9. MUSEUM OF WITCHCRAFT & MAGIC

Contains the world's oldest and largest collection relating to witchcraft, magic and the occult in the world. Located in the historic harbour of Boscastle on the North Cornwall coast since 1960.  
[museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk](http://museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk)

## 10. NEWARK TOWN HALL MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Fascinating architectural gem designed in 1774 by John Carr. A working Town Hall that also contains a museum within its beautiful Georgian rooms. Please contact by phone on 01636 680333.  
[newarktownhallmuseum.co.uk](http://newarktownhallmuseum.co.uk)

## 11. WEDGWOOD MUSEUM

Trace over 250 years of history and discover Josiah Wedgwood's lasting influence on industry and society. This museum houses the UNESCO protected V&A collection of huge historic and cultural significance.  
[worldofwedgwood.com](http://worldofwedgwood.com)

## 12. BAMBURGH CASTLE

A stunning coastal fortress at the heart of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Explore fourteen rooms, The Aviation Artefacts Museum, archaeology, cafeteria, grounds and battlements. Discover an amazing eclectic collection of 3500 items  
[bamburghcastle.com](http://bamburghcastle.com) | 01668 214515



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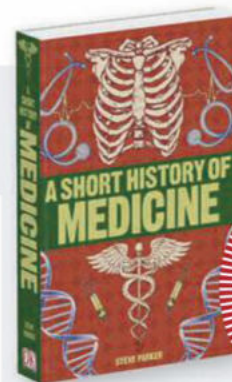
*it's a gentlemen's watch*



**WAGSTAFF**



# PRIZE CROSSWORD



Book  
worth  
**£9.99**  
for 8 winners

## A Short History of Medicine

By Steve Parker

From the grisly brutality of early operations to the sophistication of today's robotic surgery, this new book, published by DK, charts the incredible story of medicine. Discover more about moments of scientific genius, such as the emergence of germ theory and immunisation, as well as surprising historical practices including trepanning, bloodletting and alchemy.

### Across

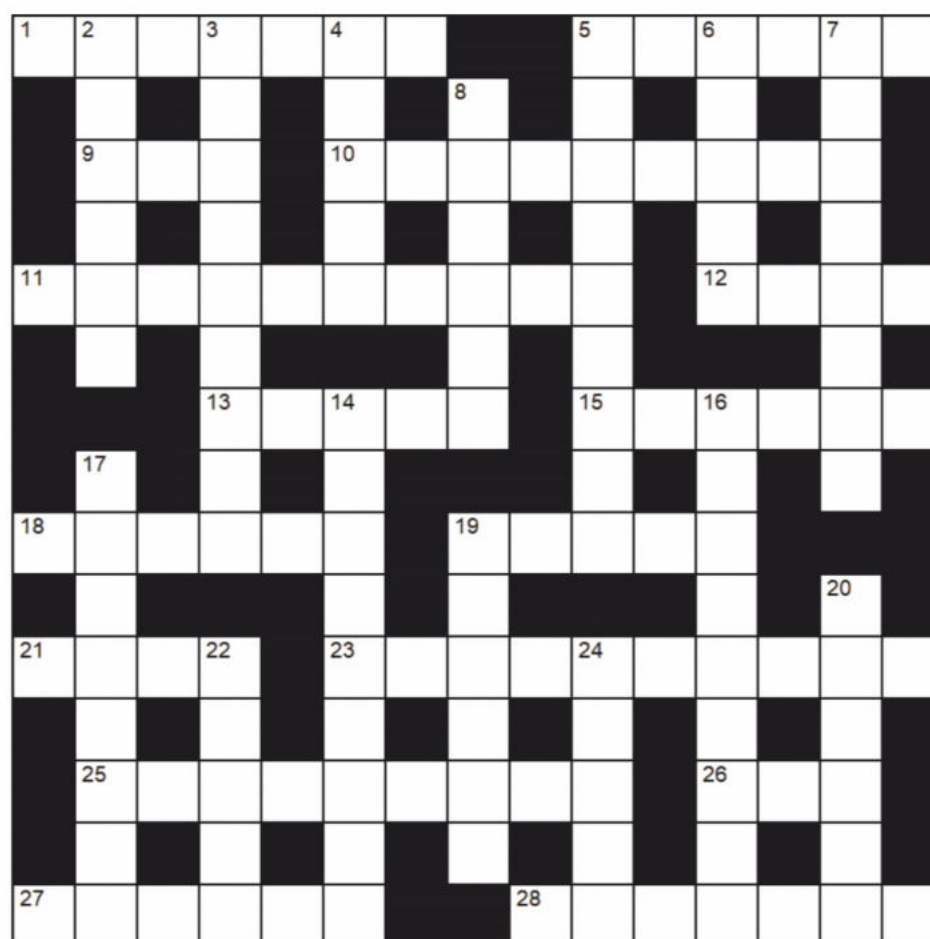
- 1** A weapon that gave the English dominance on the battlefield over the French in the Hundred Years' War (7)  
**5** Highland castle often incorrectly associated with the murder of King Duncan (6)  
**9/12** *Love on \_\_\_* (1933), by Walter Greenwood, is a bleak novel about working-class poverty (3,4)  
**10** See 21 across  
**11** The major triumph of these campaigns led by Julius Caesar was his defeat of Vercingetorix's army (6,4)  
**12** See 9 across  
**13** US secretary of state who resigned in protest at the (failed) US military mission to end the Iran hostage crisis (5)  
**15** City that became the royalist headquarters of Charles I during the Civil War of 1642–51 (6)  
**18** Tututepec was the ancient capital of this Mesoamerican culture of the Oaxaca region of Mexico (6)  
**19** A novelty at the time, this played a vital role in the arrest of the murderer Dr Crippen, aboard a ship to Canada (5)  
**21/10** Prime minister who was the chief political adviser and friend of Queen Victoria early in her reign (4,9)  
**23** The Ruhr \_\_\_\_\_ by France and Belgium, 1923–25, was in response to Germany's defaulting on its reparation obligations (10)  
**25** A form of artillery used to illuminate, in areas such as no man's land between opponents' trenches (4,5)  
**26** The halberd combined this with a pick and an elongated pike head (3)  
**27** Dragon symbol (below) associated with the ancient kingdom of Wessex (6)

**28** Peninsular War battle of 5 March 1811, which gave Anglo-Spanish forces an indecisive victory over the French (7)



### Down

- 2** Sir James \_\_\_, 19th-century military leader whose nickname, "the Bayard of India", is inscribed on his Westminster Abbey gravestone (6)  
**3** Highland distillery and site of a battle in October 1594 between victorious Catholic forces and the Earl of Argyll's Protestant army (9)  
**4** The earliest known major civilisation of Mesoamerica, which lasted until about 400 BC (5)  
**5** A diversion that first appeared, in its



- recognisably modern form, in the *New York World* of 21 December 1913 (9)  
**6** 'Old \_\_\_', refers to Africa, Asia and Europe before contact with the Americas (5)  
**7** The Allied invasion of Normandy, beginning on 6 June 1944, was given this codeword (8)  
**8** Sir Hans \_\_\_, 17th-/18th-century Irish physician and naturalist whose vast collection helped found the British Museum (6)  
**14** Twentieth-century English artist who, together with his second wife, Barbara Hepworth, and Henry Moore, established modernism in Britain (9)  
**16** Side stalls and entertainment held on a frozen river during the 'Little Ice Age' (5,4)  
**17** Igor \_\_\_, Ukrainian-born US aircraft designer and developer of the helicopter (8)  
**19** Name of the 1829 Liverpool & Manchester Railway's pioneering locomotive (6)  
**20** Pilot of the US U-2 spy plane shot down in USSR in 1960 (6)  
**22** Buckland Abbey was the home of this 16th-century privateer and one-time mayor of Plymouth (5)  
**24** The ancient Macedonian capital where Alexander the Great was born in 356 BC (5)

Compiled by **Eddie James**



Who was this aircraft designer who developed the helicopter?  
(see 17 down)

### HOW TO ENTER

- Open to residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands). Post entries to **BBC History Magazine, September 2019 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to **september2019@historycomps.co.uk** by 5pm on **4 September 2019**.
- Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the November 2019 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at [immediatemediacompany.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/](http://immediatemediacompany.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/).
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### Solution to our July 2019 Crossword

**Across:** 1 Hubble 4 Spenser 9 WRAC 10 Epidaurus 11 Isabella I 12 Elba 13/1D Keir Hardie 16 Ben 18 BAR 19 BBC 20 Shah 22/15 Iron Age 24 Lexington 26 Cuneiform 27 Ovid 28 Mayans 29 Tyndale  
**Down:** 2 Buccaneer 3 Liege 5 Pharisees 6 Norse 7 East Bank 8 William Caxton 14 Rebellion 16 Brantwood 17 Eboracum 21 O'Neill 23 Nancy 25 Nimby  
**Five winners of First on the Moon**  
A Wilson, Greater Manchester; S Pegum, Barnet; E Turner, London; I Collins, Cumbria; L Heath, West Sussex

### CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

- The crossword competition is open to all residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry permitted per person.
- The closing date and time is as shown under How to Enter, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will not publish your personal details or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at [immediatemediacompany.co.uk/privacy-policy/](http://immediatemediacompany.co.uk/privacy-policy/).
- The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 20 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up.
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### Jane Austen's tips for "health and happiness"

Descriptions of health, says author Bryan Kozlowski, run throughout the work of Jane Austen. Here, Kozlowski shares four tips that can be found in the writer's classic novels, and what they tell us about contemporary attitudes towards healthy figures, women's exercise and more...

[historyextra.com/janeaustenhealth](http://historyextra.com/janeaustenhealth)



### 9 of the most overrated battles in history

From Bosworth to the Battle of Britain, nine battles accorded a decisive importance that may not stand up to close scrutiny...

[historyextra.com/overrated-battles](http://historyextra.com/overrated-battles)



### 10 things you (probably) didn't know about the Jacobites

The 1745 Jacobite Rebellion was a turning point in British history. Yet, the reality of the '45 is obscured by fiction and fables...

[historyextra.com/jacobitefacts](http://historyextra.com/jacobitefacts)



### Poldark tourists

The so-called 'Poldark effect' has brought record levels of tourists to visit popular Cornish beauty spots. But the Georgian drama is not the only programme to attract visitors from Britain and beyond...

[historyextra.com/tv-tourism](http://historyextra.com/tv-tourism)



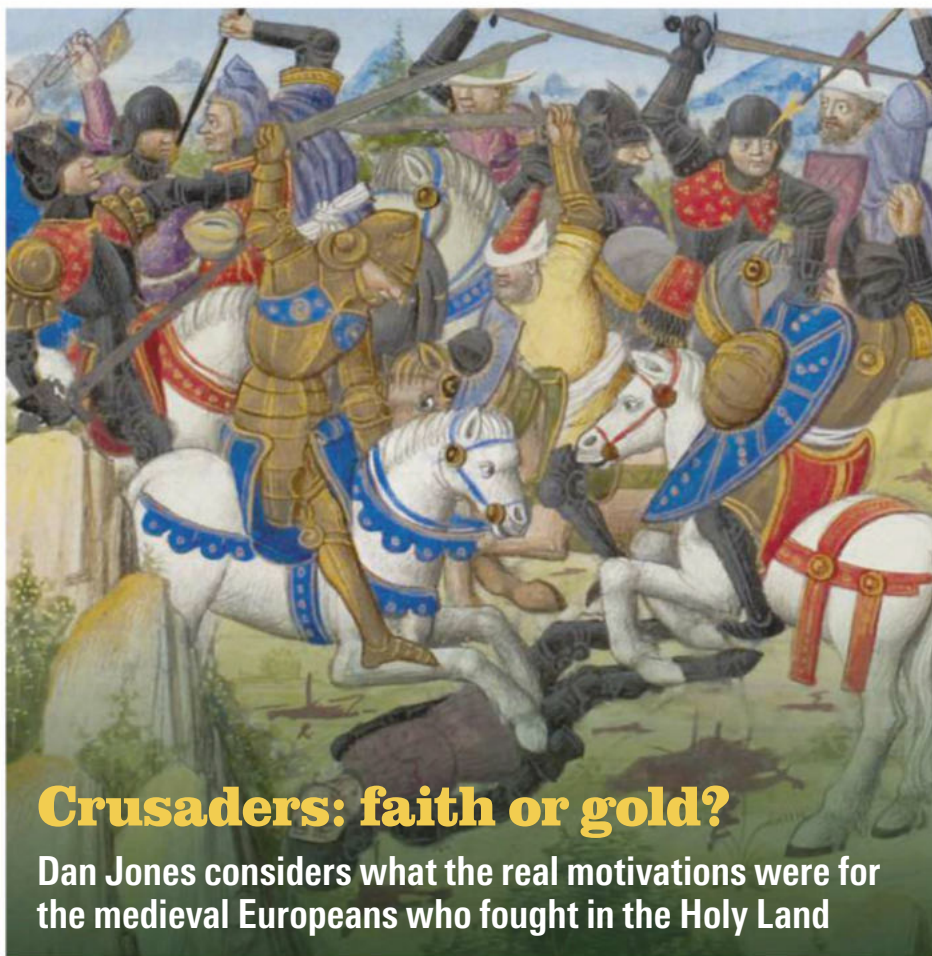
### Elizabeth of York: a Tudor of rare talent

She may not have sought the limelight as much as some of her contemporaries, but Henry VIII's mother was a Tudor of rare talent, says Alison Weir...

[historyextra.com/rare-tudor](http://historyextra.com/rare-tudor)

# NEXT MONTH

October issue on sale 5 September 2019



## Crusaders: faith or gold?

Dan Jones considers what the real motivations were for the medieval Europeans who fought in the Holy Land

## Bold vision

Ellie Cawthorne explores how innovations have appeared in art



## A great ruler?

Janet Hartley considers whether Russian empress Catherine II deserves her notorious reputation



## Rise of the Nazis

Stephan Malinowski on the Germans who facilitated Hitler's path to power

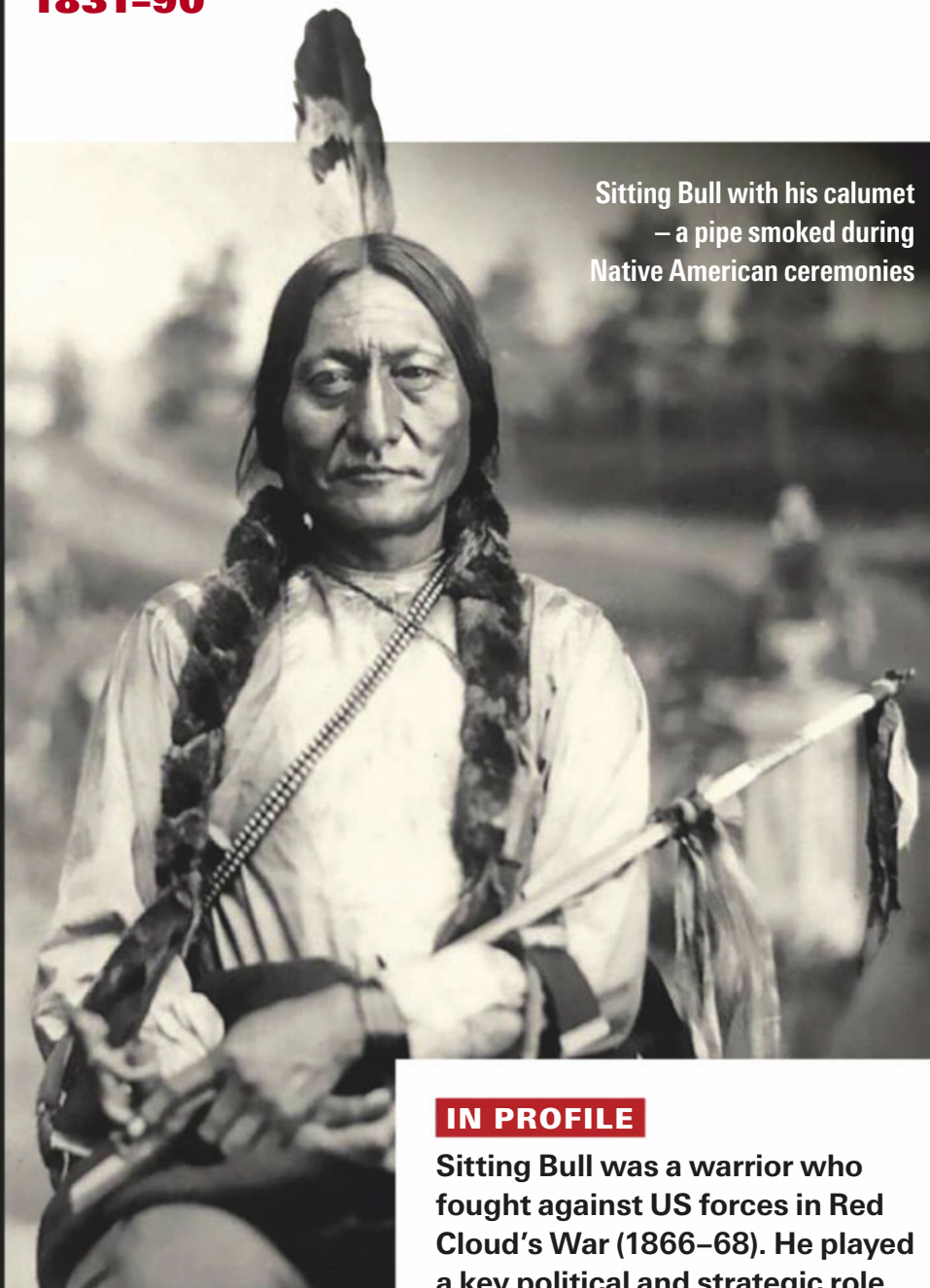


# MY HISTORY HERO

Screenwriter *Steven Knight* chooses

## Sitting Bull

1831–90



Sitting Bull with his calumet  
– a pipe smoked during  
Native American ceremonies

### IN PROFILE

Sitting Bull was a warrior who fought against US forces in Red Cloud's War (1866–68). He played a key political and strategic role in the Great Sioux War of 1876, and fought at the battle of the Little Bighorn. As settlers encroached on the northern plains, slaughtering buffalo herds and irrevocably disrupting traditional nomadic life, he joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Viewed as a leader by his people until the end, Sitting Bull died when an attempt to arrest him ended with his being shot in the chest and head.

// He filled his pipe – bullets whizzing all around him – smoked it, emptied it, and walked back. Not a single bullet hit him //



Steven Knight is the writer/creator of *Peaky Blinders*, which is due to return to BBC One this month

**How did you first hear about Sitting Bull?** I was an odd child and obsessed with Native American history from the age of nine, especially the Plains Indians – of course Sitting Bull is very prominent in that history. As a teenager, I had pen friends in South Dakota who were descendants of him. I don't know why I had this obsession. I lived on a housing estate in Birmingham.

**What kind of person was he?** He was born at a time when the Sioux were dominant on the northern plains of America. It was very much a warrior society and he rose to the top purely because of his courage and bravery. He was very insightful. He went to Chicago and saw the poverty there, and he said: "The white man can make everything, but he just doesn't know how to distribute it."

**What made him a hero?** This one man is the thread going through an entire period of history. He was adaptable but maintained his belief in his own way of life. Now, more than 100 years have gone by, and his view of the world is becoming *the view* of the world – that it needs to be sustained; that you can't damage it; that you can't go around wiping out entire species; that you can't plough up the earth without consequences.

**What was his finest hour?** Sitting Bull's own proudest moment was when he walked into no man's land with a pipe in his mouth, mid-battle. He filled his pipe – bullets whizzing all around him – smoked it, emptied it, and walked back. Not a single bullet hit him. That was the moment, among the Native Americans, when he was considered holy, that he was chosen. While it was this act of bravery – or foolishness – that he deemed to be his finest hour, for me personally it was his defence of the [Great Sioux] Reservation in the years after fighting with US forces had stopped.

### Is there anything about him you find difficult?

A thousand things because he's from a totally different culture. He killed a lot of people with his own hands. I can't imagine doing that and then not being destroyed by that for the rest of your life. But that was the society they lived in.

### If you could ask him one question, what would it be?

Was it worth it? It's a bigger question than it sounds. If someone does all that he did with his life and fails, and is given the chance again, would he say, "No, I'm not going to do that because it fails in the end", or would he decide, fail or not, that he has to do it the way he did? I suspect he wouldn't have had it any other way. **H**

Steven Knight was talking to Jonathan Wright

### LISTEN AGAIN

In Radio 4's **Great Lives**, guests choose inspirational figures: [bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxs](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxs)







# Thank you, Sylvia

## Sylvia left a gift in her Will to help conquer Stroke

The first we knew of Sylvia was when we received notification of the gift she'd left us in her Will. Shortly after, a beautiful story of a much-loved woman began to unfurl.

Friends remembered Sylvia's kind-heart and her wish to help others. She spent part of her adult-life caring for her mother, and developed a passion

for medicine. Becoming a medical secretary was her next step and, in the course of her career, she discovered the devastating impact a stroke could have on people and their families. She saw that research and treatment were vastly under-funded, and she decided to remember the Stroke Association in her Will.

Sylvia's gift has helped fund our work to conquer stroke. She's supported research to prevent and treat stroke, and she's helped care for survivors. And that's something you can do too – in the same way.

**If you would like to learn more about remembering the Stroke Association in your Will, please get in touch.**

**Call 020 75661505 email [legacy@stroke.org.uk](mailto:legacy@stroke.org.uk)  
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